# YuGiOh! Negative Zero

## JuJube the Tree

Yu-Gi-Oh + Yu-Gi-Oh GX Crossover

Abandoned

Created by FicLab

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# YuGiOh! Negative Zero

**JuJube the Tree**

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# Summary

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## Description:

Fifteen years after Judai and company graduate from Duel Academia, Asuka Tenjouin has become head professor of the school and a mysterious new student enters.

# 1. The Ultimate Rare Card Dark Armed Dragon

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (). Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn One: "The Ultimate Rare Card, Dark Armed Dragon"***

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It was the beginning of another new year in Duel Academia and the entrance exams were drawing to a

close.

The newly-named head professor of Duel Academia, Asuka Tenjouin, was going through her files when one of her assistants tapped her on the shoulder.

“There’s an applicant who’s come in five minutes after the deadline,” he told her. “He’s already completed the written exam portion from last week, and he wants a chance to complete the Battle aspect.”

“Deadlines are deadlines,” Tenjouin said. “If I let someone in past deadline, I’ll never hear the end of it from the Chancellor.”

“But that’s just the thing,” the assistant replied. “I just received a request from the Chancellor himself that you let him in.”

“The Chancellor?”

“Yes.”

Tenjouin paused and thought to herself. *The Chancellor?* she thought. *This child must be someone special if he made the call himself to let him in.*

Her curiosity was piqued.

“Very well, then,” she said. “It seems most of the proctors have gone home, so I’ll take it upon myself to duel this applicant. Give me his information.”

One of her assistants passed her a file, and she looked through it.

“Aoyama Shougo, 14 years old, from Domino. Only barely passed the examinations. Test proctors noted an extreme lack of confidence.” *Hmm. He’s not from one of the elite families. He seems to be strictly middle class economic-wise. I’ll have to see what this boy has that makes the Chancellor want to let him in.*

“Thank you, sir,” she said, returning the file.

“Will you be taking an examination deck?” she was asked.

“No, thank you. Don’t forget, the rules have changed. I don’t have to be defeated for the examinant to be allowed entry. And after all, it has been a long time since I used my old deck.”

Tenjouin smiled as she retrived her Duel Academia deck. *A deck is full of memories,* she thought. *It will be nice to relive a few.*

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When Tenjouin entered the duel arena, she saw her opponent — a frumpled-looking young man with grown-out hair covering his roaming eyes. She could tell he didn't like all the attention that came with his duel being the last of the day.

He finally noticed Tenjouin enter, and bowed awkwardly. "Hello there," he said politely.

"Hello," Tenjouin said, equally politely. "My name is Tenjouin Asuka, the lead professor of Obelisk Blue and head professor of Duel Academia. I'm going to be your opponent for the Battle test. Please remember that the outcome of this Duel is not important, as your skill will determine whether or not you get into the school." She smiled.

"So, I don't have to win?" Shougo asked, putting his deck hesitantly into his deck.

"Just do your best," Tenjouin replied.

"Okay," Shougo said. He turned on his Duel Disk and Tenjouin did so as well. *I wonder why the Chancellor himself would ask me to give this child a chance. He seems so…*

"Let's do this!" Shougo shouted.

"Excuse me?"

“If I defeat you in front of everyone, I can prove my worth. So let’s get on with it.” Shougo spoke coarsely now.

Tenjouin’s eyes narrowed.

“Duel!” they said in unison.

The professor was amazed. When the duel was declared, something changed in Shougo’s expression. His body straightened and his movements became more determined.

“As the challenger, I will go first,” Shougo said. “Draw!”

Tenjouin looked carefully at the candidate’s body movements.

“I play the Magic card, ‘Angel’s Charity’. I draw three cards from the deck, and then discard two to the Cemetery.” Shougo then followed through. His movements were determined, and Tenjouin looked at the two cards he discarded. She recognized one of them as Dark Dimension’s Release, but the other…

…her eyes widened. *Could it be…?*

“Now I play the Magic card ‘Premature Burial’,” Shougo said. “By paying 800 Life Points, I can

Special Summon a card from my Cemetery. The card I choose is…”

Shougo’s Life Points lowered to 3200 as a roar filled the field. A roar that sounded eerily familiar to Tenjouin…

***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP — 800 — 3200 LP*

“Come out! Red-Eyes Black Dragon!”

The slender, black dragon appeared on the field, to the amazement of all the spectators.

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2400 ATK)*

*Red-Eyes… Black Dragon.* That was the signature card of Tenjouin’s brother, Fubuki. He had much knowledge of the events surrounding the “Darkness incident”, but since graduating, he’d left most of that behind to pursue a musical career. The card itself was very rare, with very few existing, and was known to most as the signature card of legendary duelist Katsuya Jonouchi.

“I haven’t Normal Summoned this turn yet,” Shougo spoke, as if reminding his opponent. “I summon Blood Vorse in attack mode as well. Turn end.”

***Blood Vorse*** *— LV4 Dark Beast-Warrior (1900 ATK)*

The spectators grasped. This young upstart had summoned two powerful monsters in his first turn. But Tenjouin wasn't moved.

*This child's confidence is gone now,* she noted. *He's nothing like the duelist I saw before. I'm somewhat disappointed. Still… I can't deny that I'm in a troublesome position.*

"What's wrong, Tenjouin-sensei?" Shougo said. "Are you impressed? Why don't you just let me in the school now? You said yourself whether I win or lose this doesn't make any difference."

*And his attitude is starting to annoy me,* she thought to herself.

"My turn… draw. I summon Cyber Tutu in attack mode."

The image of a young girl in skin-tight clothing and ballerina accents appeared on the field.

***Cyber Tutu*** *— LV3 Earth Warrior (1000 ATK)*

"Cyber Tutu's special effect activates," Tenjouin explained. "When all my opponent's monsters are stronger than her, she can attack you directly. Go,

Cyber Tutu! Attack Aoyama-kun… Nouvelle Point!”

The monster span around in place several times, then leaped towards Shougo, ready to attack.

But a strange, furred creature appeared to block the attack.

“I discard Kuriboh from my hand to negate the damage from your attack,” Shougo announced.

*That was Kuriboh!* Tenjouin thought to herself. *Why would he use him on such a minor attack?*

“I set one card face down, and end my turn,” Tenjouin said.

“My turn,” Shougo said. “Draw!”

His eyes no longer wavered and he moved with determination again. *His confidence is back,* Tenjouin noted. *What’s with this guy?*

“I summon Knight of the End in attack mode!” Shougo announced.

***Knight of the End*** *— LV4 Dark Warrior (1400 ATK)*

“And now his special effect activates; I can search my deck for a Dark-attribute monster and send it to the cemetery. I choose Blood Vorse!”

He slipped the card into his graveyard slot, and then shuffled his deck.

“Red-Eyes Black Dragon!” he shouted. “Attack Tenjouin-sensei’s Cyber Tutu… Dark Mega Flare!”

The dragon reared up to release its attack, and Tenjouin grunted. *He’s completely ignoring my facedown*, she thought to herself. *How naive.*

“Reverse card open — Instant Magic card, Prima Light! By tributing Cyber Tutu, I can summon from my deck — Cyber Prima! Come out!”

The image of the young woman faded away in a stream of light to be replaced by a woman wearing a mask and blue-grey clothing. She had a white mane of hair and two rotating ‘rings’ for a dress.

***Cyber Prima*** *— LV6 Light Warrior (2300 ATK)*

“Prima Light’s effect has this summon treated as a Sacrifice Summon,” Tenjouin explained. “Which means I can activate Cyber Prima’s effect, destroying all face-up Magic cards on the field.”

Shougo was taken aback. “But that means…”

“Red-Eyes!” Tenjouin shouted. “Return to sleep! Cyber Prima… destroy Premature Burial!”

The monster fired shocks of energy at the hologram of Shougo’s revival card and shattered it. With another howl, Red-Eyes Black Dragon’s image shimmered off the field. With Prima’s attack power of 2300, neither Blood Vorse nor Knight of the End could challenge her.

But Shougo smiled.

“I wanted to avoid showing this in front of everyone,” he said. “But I guess it can’t be helped now.”

“What?” Tenjouin asked.

“I have three dark attribute monsters in my cemetery — Red-Eyes Black Dragon, Kuriboh and Blood Vorse. That means I can now special summon my trump card!”

A dark rumble erupted in the arena as the lights started to fade. He was summoning a powerful monster! *It couldn’t possibly be… could it?* Tenjouin thought to herself…

Shougo posed triumphantly. “I summon to the field… Dark Armed Dragon!”

Tenjouin heard the impressed murmurs of the crowd as the metallic dragon emerged on the field from a dark mist. It looked similar to the Armed Dragon cards that her fellow student Jun Manjoume used, but colored nearly black.

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

She stared up at the dragon. *This is an incredibly rare card. People have payed insane amounts of money to get their hands on it, yet this boy calls it out so effortlessly.*

“My Battle Phase is over,” Shougo said. “But I can still do some damage to your field. Dark Armed Dragon’s special effect, activate! By removing the Blood Vorse in my cemetery from play, I can destroy one card on your field. Dark Armed Dragon… destroy Cyber Prima!”

The dragon reared up its arm and dark energy began to glow on both its palms.

“Dark Genocide!” Shougo ordered. And the dragon threw two energy bolts at Cyber Prima. The monster shielded herself, but was destroyed.

“Turn end.”

The whispers of shock could still be heard in the silent auditorium, as this was the last match of the day. Tenjouin, however, would not be fazed.

“My turn… draw!” Tenjouin looked at her hand. *Perfect.*

“I play the Magic card Fusion,” she announced. “Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater fuse together to form Cyber Blader!”

A flash of light erupted in the arena as the two fighters formed into one, a mechanical figurine which floated on the field.

***Cyber Blader** — LV7 Earth Warrior (2100 ATK)*

“2100 attack points?” Shougo scoffed. “What is she going to do?”

Tenjouin ignored him for now. “I play the Magic card Fusion Recovery, to bring back the Fusion card I just used, plus a monster used in the fusion. I pick Blade Skater! And I’ll summon her to the field in attack mode!”

Another figurine, this one noticeable by her bald head, appeared beside Cyber Blader.

***Blade Skater** — LV4 Earth Warrior (1400 ATK)*

“Blade Skater… attack Shougo-kun’s Knight of the End. Accel Slicer!”

Shougo blinked, obviously confused. “Knight of the End… counterattack!”

The two monsters collided in an explosion and the two duelists shielded their faces instinctively.

Tenjouin then smiled. “Now, Cyber Blader’s effect activates. When the opponent has only two monsters on the field, her attack strength doubles.”

It was Shougo’s turn to shout “What?” as an aura of power surrounded Tenjouin’s monster.

***Cyber Blader*** *— +2100 ATK (4200 ATK)*

“Cyber Blader! Destroy Dark Armed Dragon… Glissade Slash!”

Cyber Blader was already sliding towards the giant dragon. She spun, leaped forward, and slashed it with a kick. The dragon’s image shattered in a flash of light, and Shougo’s Life Points were down to 1800.

***Shougo*** *— 3200 LP — 1400 — 1800 LP*
***Cyber Blader*** *— -2100 ATK (2100 ATK)*

“Aoyama-kun,” Tenjouin said. “If you want to enter this school, you have to understand that power isn’t everything. It’s one of the first lessons everyone must learn.”

“Shut up!” Shougo shouted.

“I set one card face down and end my turn,” Tenjouin said simply. Shougo’s anger was simply the kind of frustration all new duelists faced. She was used to it.

“My turn.” Shougo pulled a card, then grinned. “I’m going to get into this school, Tenjouin-sensei. What’s more, I’m going to show everyone that I’m a worthy duelist! First, I’m going to sacrifice Blood Vorse to summon Meteor Dragon in attack mode.”

As the fire dragon appeared on the field replacing Blood Vorse, Tenjouin heard people wondering why he sacrificed a stronger monster for a weaker one. She simply waited to see what the duelist was planning.

***Meteor Dragon*** *— LV5 Earth Dragon (1800 ATK)*

She didn’t have to wait long. “Now I play the Magic card ‘Dragon’s Mirror’!” Shougo announced, placing the card on his Duel Disk. “By removing

monsters in my cemetery and on the field from the game, I can fusion summon a strong Dragon."

He then brought the Red-Eyes Black Dragon card out of his graveyard.

"The Red-Eyes doesn't bring victory but potential," he thought aloud. "That's what he showed me…"

"Who?" Tenjouin asked, wanting to know this boy's connection with the Red-Eyes.

"You don't know? The King of Duelists himself."

*…Yugi Mutou? Impossible… he no longer duels. And this boy is fourteen… it's impossible for him to have known Yugi-san while he was still dueling.*

"Now I fuse the Red-Eyes in my cemetery and my Meteor Dragon on the field to special summon the strongest card in my deck… the Meteor Black Dragon in attack mode!"

A dragon that looked like it was made out of lava appeared onto the field from the fusion of the two monsters and gave off a shrill cry. With 3500 attack points, it was indeed a strong dragon.

***Meteor Black Dragon** — LV8 Fire Dragon (3500 ATK)*

“Meteor Black Dragon! Destroy Cyber Blader… Burning Dark Meteor!”

Whispers in the crowd were heard as the monstrous dragon shot a fiery blast at Cyber Blader. Tenjouin shielded herself from the blast as she lost 1400 Life Points.

***Tenjouin** — 4000 LP — 1400 — 2600 LP*

But when the dust cleared, Cyber Blader was still alive.

“Sorry, Aoyama-kun,” Tenjouin explained. “Cyber Blader has another effect when the opponent has only one monster. She can’t be destroyed in battle.”

*And he still neglected my facedown*, she added in her mind. *But now’s not the time for that.*

“Turn end,” Shougo said.

“My turn. Draw! I play Pot of Greed.” Tenjouin drew two cards. *I could win this duel right now,* she pondered. *But this boy seems rather fragile. I don’t want to humiliate him in front of everyone, even as much as he bothers me. I’ll let the Chancellor decide.*

“I set one card face down and summon Cyber Petit Angel in defense mode,” she announced.

***Cyber Petit Angel*** *— LV2 Light Angel (200 DEF)*

“And now I activate Cyber Petit Angel’s effect. From my deck, I take a Machine Angel Ritual and put it in my hand. Turn end.”

“My turn,” Shougo replied. He then started to laugh. “You’re underestimating me, aren’t you, Tenjouin-sensei? I can tell. But now I’ll make you regret it! I play the Magic card Monster Reincarnation!”

Tenjouin’s eyes widened for a moment.

“I discard Super Hot-Blooded Baseball Kid from my hand to place Dark Armed Dragon back in my hand,” Shougo shouted. “And you know what that means? I have three Dark monsters in my cemetery still — Kuriboh, plus the Blood Vorse I sacrificed and the Knight of the End you destroyed. So now I can bring him back! Resurrect, Dark Armed Dragon!”

Once again, the lights in the arena faded a bit as the massive metallic dragon re-appeared on the field.

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *(2800 ATK)*

“I know your Cyber Blader’s attack points will double,” Shougo went on. “So I’ll take care of her right now. I remove Knight of the End in my cemetery from play to destroy your Cyber Blader. Dark Genocide!”

The dragon fired bolts of dark energy at Tenjouin’s monster.

“I won’t let you do that,” Tenjouin said. “Reverse card open, Fusion Cancel! I’ll return Cyber Blader to my deck, and then special summon Blade Skater and Etoile Cyber from my cemetery in defense mode!” The energy harmlessly slammed on the field where Cyber Blader was, as the two fusion components returned to the field and raised their arms to guard from future attacks.

***Blade Skater*** *(1500 DEF)*
***Etoile Cyber*** *— LV4 Earth Warrior (1600 DEF)*

*Of course, I could have used this last turn to get rid of Meteor Black Dragon and win the duel,* Tenjouin sighed. *I just hope I won’t regret this.*

Shougo grunted bitterly. “I’ll remove Blood Vorse from play, then, and destroy your other facedown card.”

But Tenjouin was ready for that, too. As another bolt fired from the dragon, she declared her move. “Reverse card open, Emissaries of Harmony! This turn, none of my monsters can be destroyed by battle, and I’ll take no damage from any of your attacks.” Once again, the bolt of energy did nothing more than kick up dust on the arena, and Shougo had wasted his card.

“You have one card left,” Tenjouin reminded her opponent. “Which of my monsters will you destroy?”

“I’ll destroy your Etoile Cyber,” Shougo said, pulling his Kuriboh out of the graveyard. “Dark Armed Dragon! Dark Genocide!”

Tenjouin fell back as her monster was destroyed. *I’m in trouble again,* she thought to herself. *Unless I draw a good card next turn, I could lose.*

Shougo’s hand was empty, so there was nothing left for him to do. “Turn end,” he announced.

“My turn… draw!” Tenjouin looked at the card she drew, and felt a mixed sense of relief and frustration. *I was really lucky to draw this, but I have to go with what I receive,* she thought. “I play the Magic…”

A beep from the cell phone in the professor's pocket brought her out of her dueling mindset. She opened it up. It was the Chancellor.

"This duel doesn't need to go on any longer," he said. "I've reviewed the boy's file and decided to accept him as an Osiris Red student."

"Yes, Sir, but I request you to allow me to finish this Duel," she replied. "I don't like to leave things unfinished."

"You are to end this duel now. As I said, it does not need to continue, and you do have to prepare for future examinations."

"Understood, Sir. Will that be all?"

"Yes, Tenjouin-sama, that is all."

She hung up the phone and sighed, lowering her Duel Disk. "That was the Chancellor of Duel Academia," she said. "He said you've been accepted, so there's no need for the duel to continue."

"R… really?" Shougo put his disk down, and reverted to his nervous personality from earlier. "I'm in?"

“Yes, Aoyama-kun. My assistants will give you information and directions to the flight that will lead you to the island tomorrow morning.”

“I’m in!” Shougo shouted. “I did it!” He then exhaled a sigh of relief. If Tenjouin hadn’t dueled him herself, she would find it hard to believe he was the same boy who had been fighting so fiercely just a moment ago.

*All the same, I do wonder about him… even if he was dueling with all his heart, his skills aren’t up to par with the other duelists here. He didn’t know about my card effects. He didn’t play any facedowns. He seemed to rely on power. Is that the kind of person we want here?*

As Tenjouin walked away from the arena, she could still hear Shougo celebrating his acceptance into the school. She sighed, smiled and shook her head.

*I guess we all can learn.*

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** *The Effect Monster, “Dark Armed Dragon”*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This

card cannot be Special Summoned except by having exactly 3 Dark-Attribute Monsters in your Cemetery. You can remove from play 1 Dark-Attribute Monster from your Cemetery to destroy 1 card on the field.

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**Chiba:** “It’s a duel next time to be sure!”
**Shougo:** “Sure, sure. My new roommate wants to duel me using his Warrior deck. I tell him it’s a bad idea, but he insists.”
**Chiba:** “Shougo-kun, you wouldn’t be telling this story if you’d held back and decided not to duel me, you know!”
**Shougo:** “Chiba-kun! We’re not that far yet!”
**Chiba:** “I have Shougo-kun on the ropes with my lovely Command Knights, but Shougo’s able to get out his trump card! How will I deal with it? You’ll have to see for yourself!”
**Shougo:** “Next time on *Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero* — ***‘The Warrior Deck of the Friendly Roommate, Chiba’***.”
**Chiba:** “Awesome, Shougo-kun! Only the second episode and I get to be featured!”

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## SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION

CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**ANGEL'S CHARITY (Graceful Charity)**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 3 cards from your deck. Then, discard 2 cards from your hand to the Cemetery.

**DARK DIMENSION'S RELEASE (Escape from the Dark Dimension)**
*Continuous Trap*
Select 1 Dark-Attribute Monster that is removed from play and Special Summon it. When this card is removed from the field, destroy that monster. When that monster is destroyed, destroy this card.

**PREMATURE BURIAL**
*Equip Magic*
Pay 800 Life Points. Select 1 Monster in your cemetery, Special Summon it in Attack position, and equip it with this card. When this card is destroyed, destroy the equipped Monster.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON (Red-Eyes B. Dragon)**
*Normal Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
A ferocious dragon with a deadly attack.

**BLOOD VORSE (Vorse Raider)**
*Normal Monster (L4 Dark Beast-Warrior, 1900/1200)*
This wicked Beast-Warrior does every horrid thing imaginable and loves it! His axe bears the marks of his countless victims.

**KURIBOH**
*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Demon, 300/200)*
When your opponent attacks you during their Battle Phase, you may discard this card from your hand to make the Battle Damage from that attack 0.

**KNIGHT OF THE END (Armageddon Knight)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Warrior, 1400/1200)*
When this card is Summoned, you can send 1 Dark-attribute Monster from your Deck to the cemetery.

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

**METEOR DRAGON**
*Normal Monster (L5 Earth Dragon, 1800/2000)*

This dragon appeared from the sky and crashed to the earth.

**DRAGON'S MIRROR**
*Normal Magic*
Remove from play Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Dragon-Type Fusion Monster Card from your side of the field or your Graveyard, and Special Summon the selected Fusion Monster from your Fusion Deck. (This Special Summon is treated as a Fusion Summon.)

**METEOR BLACK DRAGON (Meteor B. Dragon)**
*Fusion Monster (L8 Fire Dragon, 3500/2000)*
"Red-Eyes Black Dragon" + "Meteor Dragon"

**MONSTER REINCARNATION**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 card from your hand, and return a Monster card in your cemetery to your hand.

**SUPER HOT-BLOODED BASEBALL KID (Ultimate Baseball Kid)**
*Effect Monster (L3 Fire Warrior, 500/1000)*
This card gains 1000 ATK for each other Fire-attribute Monster on the field. You can send 1 Fire-attribute Monster you control other than this card to

the cemetery to inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent.

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CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:

**CYBER TUTU**
*Effect Monster (L3 Earth Warrior, 1000/800)*
If your opponent only controls monsters with ATK higher than the ATK of this card, you may attack your opponent directly with this Monster.

**PRIMA LIGHT**
*Instant Magic*
Tribute 1 “Cyber Tutu” you control to Special Summon 1 “Cyber Prima” from your Hand or Deck. (This Special Summon is treated as a Tribute Summon.)

**CYBER PRIMA**
*Effect Monster (L6 Light Warrior, 2300/1600)*
When this card is Tribute Summoned, destroy all face-up Magic cards on the field.

**FUSION (Polymerization)**
*Normal Magic*
Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion Monster card from your hand or side of the field to

the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck.

**ETOILE CYBER**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1200/1600)*
If this card attacks your opponent directly, its ATK goes up by 500 points during the Damage Step.

**BLADE SKATER**
*Normal Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1400/1500)*
An image of beauty on the ice, this gorgeous warrior rips her opponents to pieces with her stylish Accel Slicer attack.

**CYBER BLADER**
*Fusion Monster (L7 Earth Warrior, 2100/800)*
"Etoile Cyber" + "Blade Skater"
A Fusion Summon of this Monster can only be conducted with the above Fusion-Material Monsters. This card gains the following effects according to the number of monsters your opponent controls:
1 — This monster cannot be destroyed as a result of battle.
2 — This monster's Attack points are doubled.
3 — Negate the effects of your opponent's Magic, Trap and Monster Cards.

**FUSION RECOVERY**
*Normal Magic*

Return 1 “Fusion” Magic card and 1 Fusion-Material Monster used in a Fusion Summon from the cemetery to your hand.

**POT OF GREED**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**CYBER PETIT ANGEL**

*Effect Monster (L2 Light Angel, 300/200)*

When this card is Summoned you can select 1 “Machine Angel Ritual” from your Deck and add it to your hand.

**MACHINE ANGEL RITUAL**

*Ritual Magic*

This card is used to Ritual Summon a “Cyber Angel” Monster. You must offer monsters whose total Level equal the Level of the Ritual Monster.

**FUSION CANCEL (De-Fusion)**

*Instant Magic*

Return 1 Fusion Monster on the field to its owner’s Fusion deck. In addition, if the Fusion-Material Monsters exist in your cemetery, you may Special Summon those monsters to the field.

**EMISSARIES OF HARMONY (Waboku)**

*Normal Trap*

You take no Battle Damage this turn, and your Monsters cannot be destroyed as a result of battle.

# 2. Warrior Deck of Friendly Roommate Chiba

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. Don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (). Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — ()**
***Turn Two: "The Warrior Deck of the Friendly Roomate, Chiba"***

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It was now time for all the newly-accepted freshmen to arrive on the Duel Academia Island. Most of the students were talking amongst

themselves, excited about their future lives as students of the most prestigious Duel Monsters school in the world.

Shougo just looked out the window at the sea for the entirety of the trip.

He heard people talking about him, but pretended not to notice.

“Hey, is that the kid who almost beat the Obelisk Blue teacher?”

“Yeah, I hear he’s not too bad, but he almost didn’t get in at all because he was late.”

“I hear he only won because he has some rare cards.”

“Yeah, you’re probably right. How could an Osiris freshman come close to beating the Obelisk professor like that…”

*I’ll prove them all wrong,* Shougo thought as he continued to focus on the sea. *They’ll have to respect me…*

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Shougo sat and listened to the orientation speeches of the faculty without really paying attention. He wanted to get into his dorm room and sleep. It had been a long day of accomplishing little, and Shougo wanted to get it over with.

All the students were given their equipment and duel disks and sent to their appropriate dorms. Many talked to each other, some because they'd known each other before, and others in hopes of trading cards. Shougo didn't even unpack his card deck. He just went straight to his room.

There was another boy there who greeted him as he came in. "Hello there!" he called out.

"Hi," Shougo said, putting his luggage down.

"I heard about you," the teenager replied, adjusting his glasses. "Aoyama Shougo, right? You came very close to beating Tenjouin-sensei."

"It could have gone either way, I guess," Shougo mumbled.

"I'm Chiba Katsurou, I've been here a year already and I'm still in Osiris. I guess that tells a lot about my skill, huh?"

“Not really.” Shougo turned away and started unpacking his things.

Chiba sighed and sat down on his bed.

“We’re going to be rooming together,” Chiba explained. “We might as well be friends.”

“I’d really prefer we not,” Shougo replied, continuing to unpack. “It’d be better if we just stayed to ourselves.”

“What’s the ma… oh, I’m prying. I’m sorry.”

Then he got an idea.

“Hey, I know! Why don’t we duel?”

“That’s really the worst thing to do if you want to be friends with me,” Shougo said, not looking at his roommate. “Nobody who duels me stays friendly with me for long.”

“Well, maybe that’s true, but you’ve got to take the chance, don’t you?” Chiba hopped down from his bed. “After all, why would you come here, if you didn’t love to duel?”

Shougo unpacked his deck and looked it over. He felt a voice in his head again calling him to battle.

This guy seemed nice enough, but how long would that last?

“I don’t know,” Shougo said, mostly to himself.

“I insist,” Chiba pressed. “We can duel right outside. There’s a great view of the sea. What better place could we ask for? I’d like to get right down to business.”

Finally, Shougo gave in and picked up his deck and duel disk. “Okay, if you insist, then I guess I have no choice.”

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The two duelists stood facing each other outside the Osiris Red dorms. A few students stood outside and watched. For them it was the first duel they’d see since after their entrance exams.

“Let’s have a fun game,” Chiba said.

“Whatever,” Shougo sighed, and put his hand on his deck.

“Duel!” they both shouted.

“I’ll go first, if that’s alright with you.”

Shougo shrugged and sighed. “It’s fine with me either way,” he said.

“Draw,” Chiba went on. “I summon Command Knight in defense mode!”

A red-armored female knight shimmered onto the field and knelt, holding her shield up.

***Command Knight*** *— LV4 Fire Warrior (1900 DEF)*

“I set one card face down, and end my turn.”

Shougo sighed and narrowed his eyes. Once he was fully into a duel, it was rare that he would come out of it making a friend. But this guy insisted, and there was nothing else to do.

“My turn… draw!”

He tried not to wince. *This hand isn’t the greatest, but it’ll do for now.* “I’ll set one defense position monster and one card facedown. That’s it.”

“You’re not holding back on me, are you, Shougo-kun?” Chiba said. “Don’t be afraid to give me your all. I won’t hate you for it, I promise!”

“We’ll see,” Shougo said. “Just remember you asked for it.”

“I won’t forget,” Chiba replied. “My turn. Draw! And I’ll summon Little Red Riding Hood in defense mode!”

***Little Red Riding Hood*** *— LV3 Earth Angel (1200 DEF)*

A monster obviously modeled after the old fairy tale appeared. Shougo was taken aback, and chuckled. “What is she going to do?”

“Don’t underestimate my deck,” Chiba warned his opponent. “They’ll knock you for a loop if you do! Command Knight, switch to attack mode and battle his facedown monster!”

***Command Knight*** *(1200 ATK)*

The knight quickly leapt to her feet and jumped towards the hidden card.

“Command Knight’s special effect makes her and other warriors gain 400 points,” Chiba explained as an aura of power appeared around his monster.

***Command Knight*** *+400 ATK (1600 ATK)*

“Unfortunately, Riding Hood is an angel-type, so she won’t get the bonus.”

The knight's sword struck and broke the card in half. An image of a strange, wrangly zombie-type monster appeared, roared and shattered.

"Oh, man," Chiba muttered. "Newdoria."

***Newdoria*** *— LV4 Dark Demon (800 DEF)*

"I'll active Newdoria's special effect now," Shougo said. "When it's destroyed in battle and sent to the graveyard, it can destroy one monster on the field. I choose Little Red Riding Hood!"

Steel, spiked rings shot out from where the card was destroyed, and made a beesline for Chiba's monster, who shouted in fear.

But Chiba smiled. "Isn't it funny how there are so many monsters in the game who have great effects if they're destroyed in battle? That's why I have this card… Reverse card open! The counter trap, 'Battle Zone'!"

Shougo blinked. "Battle Zone?"

"For the remainder of this turn," Chiba explained, "All monsters that are destroyed will act as though they were destroyed in battle. So even though Riding Hood died because of Newdoria's effect, I still get to use hers."

“Which is?”

Chiba fanned out his deck. “I can summon one Warrior-type monster from my deck. And I choose… Command Knight!”

Another knight appeared on the field in attack position and took her place just as the other Command Knight returned from her battle.

***Command Knight*** *+800 ATK (2000 ATK)*
***Command Knight*** *+400 ATK (2000 ATK)*

“Now both Command Knights have 2000 attack points. Not bad, eh?”

Shougo grunted. As much as he hated being underestimated, it annoyed him even more when he realized he was doing it himself.

“I’ll set one card facedown and end my turn, Shougo-kun,” Chiba finally said.

“Before you do, I’d like to activate something I have. Reverse card open… ‘Blazes of Demise’! I can summon two Demise Tokens in defense position. I can’t use them for Tributes, except for a dark-attribute monster.”

***Demise Token*** *— LV1 Dark Demon (0 DEF)*
***Demise Token*** *— (0 DEF)*

Two humanoid one-eyed flame figures shimmered in.

*I think I know what's coming*, Chiba thought to himself. *Good thing I'm ready…*

"My turn," Shougo shouted. "Draw! Chiba-san, if you want my all, then I'll give it to you. I tribute my Demise Tokens to summon Red-Eyes Black Dragon!"

The flame shapes evaporated and formed the shape of the deadly, dark dragon. It spread its wings and roared, ready to attack.

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2400 ATK)*

"2000 attack points is strong," Shougo said, thrusting his fist out. "But it's still no match for the Red-Eyes! Attack Command Knight… Dark Mega Flare!"

But Chiba just scratched his forehead, unconcerned. The Red-Eyes shot out its firey attack, but the other Command Knight just deflected the attack with her sword.

"Shougo-kun," Chiba wondered aloud, perplexed. "You know about Command Knight's

effect, don’t you? She can’t be targeted for an attack as long as there’s another monster on the field.”

“But… both monsters are Command Knights!”

“Exactly. This is my Command Knight lock! Or should I say, *the* Command Knight lock. It’s a really old move, but nobody really uses it anymore, so I guess I can say it’s mine.” He then rubbed the back of his head and laughed.

But Shougo just grunted in frustration, not responding to Chiba’s cheerful mood. “I set two cards facedown,” he said. “Turn end.”

“Shougo-kun, is everything alright?”

“Just make your move.”

“You shouldn’t be so frustrated,” Chiba said as he drew his card. “I hear how people talk about you, but I’m on your side. They say the same things about me, that I only win because I use tactics that are so old people have forgotten about them. But it’s fine, because I play what I like! I’m sure you feel the same way.”

Shougo thought back to the day he found the Dark Armed Dragon, before it became such a sought-after card. He genuinely enjoyed the card

overall, but when he played with it, people accused him of lording his ability to get rare cards over everyone else. Dueling quickly became less about fun and more about proving a point after that.

This duel was no different. This guy… he wasn't going to turn out to be any different.

Chiba chuckled as he looked at his hand. "I think you might dislike me even more when I play this," he said. "But I promised you my best! I play the monster card Rogue Mercenaries!"

A group of menacing-looking haggard soldiers appeared next to the Command Knights.

***Rogue Mercenaries*** *— LV4 Earth Warrior (1000 ATK)*

"Rogue Mercenaries' special effect, activate! They can destroy one monster on the field, as long as I sacrifice them afterwards. I'll send them after your Red-Eyes! Go, Ambush Strike!"

The soldiers leapt from their position and surrounded the Red-Eyes Black Dragon.

Shougo's eyes narrowed into a frown as his prize card was threatened. "I won't let you!" he shouted. "Reverse card open… 'Phantom of Darkness'!

When a dark-attribute type monster is targeted by a card effect, I can negate and destroy that card! So my Red-Eyes will be staying right here!”

A shadowy, black flame emanated from the Red-Eyes’ body, blasting the mercenaries’ bodies this way and that.

“Good move, Shougo-kun!” Chiba laughed. “Most people are annoyed by that card. I happen to like it, though.”

“Maybe,” Shougo said. “But now that it’s gone, how are you going to beat my ace card when it shows up?”

*I have a plan for that, too,* Chiba thought. *But I’m sorry, Shougo-kun… I can’t tell you about that now.*

“Equip magic activate… Archdemon Axe,” Chiba announced. “By equipping it to a monster on my field, I can raise her attack points by 1000 points. Command Knight… get your weapons ready! Get equipped with Archdemon Axe!”

A giant axe that looked like it was partly made of flesh materialized on the field, and the Command Knight grabbed it. Her attack points went up to 3000.

***Command Knight*** *+1000 ATK (3000 ATK)*

“Now, attack the Red-Eyes!” he ordered.

*Damn it,* Shougo thought. *I don’t have any cards to save it now!*

The knight leapt up and cut the dragon through the middle, causing it to explode and Shougo to lose 600 Life Points.

***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP — 600 — 3400 LP*

“I’m not done yet!” Chiba shouted, his face starting to look serious now. “My other Command Knight will launch a direct attack now!”

The other warrior slashed Shougo across the chest. The heightened Solid Vision technology caused Shougo to almost feel the attack as his LP went down to 1400.

***Shougo*** *— 3400 LP — 2000 — 1400 LP*

“My turn’s ended,” Chiba said. “Whew! I got pretty serious there. I hope you won’t have any hard feelings.”

Shougo rubbed his nose and glared at his opponent. He was starting to get pretty frustrated with his cheerful, nonchalant attitude. *Can’t you take*

*anything seriously?* he thought. “Draw! I play the magic card ‘Foolish Burial’! I can take one monster card from my deck and place it in the Cemetery. I choose to bury a Newdoria from my deck!”

*This is it,* Chiba thought. *He’s finished the summoning requirements. Two Newdorias and a Red-Eyes in the grave…*

“Now I special summon my trump card, the Dark Armed Dragon!” Shougo slapped the card onto his duel disk, and the sky seemed to darken as the monstrous dragon appeared.

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

Some Osiris Red students had been watching their duel, but the appearance of this rare card drew virtually all of them outside to watch.

But Chiba wasn’t afraid. “Reverse card open… ‘Pitfall to Hades’! When a monster with 1500 attack points or more is summoned, this card will remove it from play.”

Shougo’s eyes widened with panic. “What?”

“But, you may still use its effect once before it goes,” Chiba volunteered. “I can’t stop you from

doing that. So, what will you destroy."

*Damn you, Chiba-san! You were waiting for me to summon Dark Armed Dragon before you flipped that! I'll make you regret this!*

"I remove my Red-Eyes Black Dragon from play to destroy the Command Knight equipped with Archdemon Axe. Dark Genocide!"

A dark pit opened beneath the Dark Armed Dragon, but before he sank into it, he threw two bolts of dark energy at the knight holding the axe. She screamed and disappeared, and the axe fell to the floor.

"I'll activate Archdemon Axe's effect now," Chiba said. "When it would be sent to the cemetery, I can sacrifice a monster on my field to put it on top of my deck instead. My other Command Knight! Find your resting place now."

The other warrior vanished, and Chiba's cemetery slot glowed as the Archdemon Axe card came out of it. Chiba placed the card on top of his deck.

Shougo frowned deeply. "Do you think you're safe now? Because you're not! Reverse card open…

‘Dark Dimension’s Release’! I can summon a monster that was removed from play to the field.”

Chiba nodded. “I see… that’s why you chose your Red-Eyes to remove from play.”

“You better believe it,” Shougo stated darkly. “Revive, my Red-Eyes, and attack Chiba-san directly with Dark Mega Flare!”

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *(2400 ATK)*

The Red-Eyes Black Dragon, whose summoning was met with gasps of shock from the duelists’ captive audience, blasted a molten fireball at Chiba. The fireball exploded into a pillar, and Chiba could swear he felt himself burning up. He shouted and grasped his chest as his life points fell to 1600.

***Chiba*** *— 4000 LP — 2400 — 1600 LP*

“There,” Shougo spat. “You still think we can be friends now? I just hurt you with my monster.”

“Of course!” Chiba said as he regained his composure. “That’s what dueling is all about! You have to give it your all in the fight, even if you’re good friends.”

Shougo just closed his eyes and gave a rather sarcastic smile. “You’re hopeless.”

“You’re probably right!”

“Turn end.”

“Well, let’s see what I can do now,” Chiba replied, and pulled the Archdemon Axe card from his deck. “I play the magic card ‘Pot of Greed’, and draw two cards. Next I’ll activate the magic card ‘Crazy Summon Gear’!”

Shougo blinked. “Crazy Summon Gear?”

“First I’ll target a monster on your side of the field, and you can summon as many copies of it as you have in your deck. Of course, you only have one, and a card as rare as the Red-Eyes…”

Chiba’s speech was cut short when two other Red-Eyes Black Dragons appeared.

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *(2400 ATK)*
***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *(2400 ATK)*

“Ohh, boy!” Chiba once again gave his nervous laugh. “I should have known better than that! Of course someone as known for finding rare cards as you has three Red-Eyes.”

“Well, thank you for the gift. But what do you get in return?”

“It won’t help me as much as I hoped, but I can still do something with it. I pick one monster in my Graveyard with less than 1500 attack points, and summon as many copies of it as I can from my grave, hand or deck. The monster I pick, of course…”

Three red-armored female warriors appeared on the field.

“…Command Knights, revive!”

Shougo gasped. With the Knights’ effects, their attack points would rise to 2400, enough to challenge the Red-Eyes. Not to mention… Chiba had the Archdemon Axe in his hand. *I’m in trouble…*

***Command Knight*** *1200 + 1200 ATK (2400 ATK)*
***Command Knight*** *1200 + 1200 ATK (2400 ATK)*
***Command Knight*** *1200 + 1200 ATK (2400 ATK)*

“Now… for my normal summon this turn, I’ll summon the Different Dimension Warrior Lady in attack mode.”

A leather-clad soldier holding a glowing sword in her bandaged arm appeared on the field.

***Different Dimension Warrior Lady*** *— LV4 Light Warrior (1500 ATK)*

“Because of the three Command Knights on the field, Warrior Lady’s attack power goes up to 2700!

***Different Dimension Warrior Lady*** *+1200 ATK (2700 ATK)*

“Now, my Command Knight… take hold of the Archdemon Axe!” Chiba ordered.

One of the red-garbed knights picked up the axe, and her aura emanated power again.

***Command Knight*** *2400 + 1000 ATK (3400 ATK)*

“Attack Shougo-kun’s Red-Eyes!” he went on.

The knight once again destroyed Shougo’s favorite card with a flourish, causing Shougo to get even angrier. His eyes narrowed as his life points hit 400.

***Shougo*** *— 1400 LP — 1000 — 400 LP*

*He’s humiliating me in front of everyone!* he seethed.

“Warrior Lady! Attack the second Red-Eyes… Ijigen Slasher!”

The soldier woman slashed the other dragon across the waist, splitting it in half. It also exploded, and Shougo's life dropped to 100.

***Shougo*** *— 400 LP — 300 — 100 LP*

"Command Knight #2!" Chiba said. "I'm sorry for sending you to your demise, but this will help me win. Attack Shougo's final Red-Eyes!"

"Counterattack, Red-Eyes!" Shougo said, getting in an attack stance. "Dark Mega Flare!"

Command Knight rushed into the blast and struck it with her sword. The resulting explosion shattered both monsters.

"Because I lost one of my Command Knights, my other warriors power down by 400 points," Chiba explained.

***Command Knight*** *3400 — 400 ATK (3000 ATK)*
***Command Knight*** *2400 — 400 ATK (2000 ATK)*
***Different Dimension Warrior Lady*** *2700 — 400 ATK (2300 ATK)*

"But you have to admit, I'm doing very well, right? But I only have one card left in my hand, and it's no good to me now. Oh well. Turn end!"

“Hm, I suppose so,” Shougo said. “I’ll admit that we’re similar in some ways. But now that everyone’s watching, I can’t allow myself to lose. My turn… draw!”

Chiba looked around and was genuinely surprised. Ra and Obelisk students had come to watch their duel as well. Some of them were cheering, too, although Chiba couldn’t hear who they were rooting for. But did it matter at this point?

“You’re right… everyone’s watching now,” he replied. “Let’s not hold back and show them our best!”

“I play the magic card ‘Allure of Darkness’,” Shougo proclaimed. “I’ll draw two cards, and then remove the card ‘Dark Dragon Hatchling’ in my hand from play.” He then drew two cards.

“Next, I play ‘Pot of Greed’, so I get two more cards!”

Chiba was amazed. *Wow! Five new cards in one turn. Awesome, Shougo-kun!*

Shougo looked at his hand. “Sorry, Chiba-san, but it looks like I’ve won.”

“Oh?”

“I summon Super Hot Blooded Baseball Kid in attack mode!”

A super-deformed figurine of a baseball player appeared on the field, and his body started to catch ablaze as he swung his bat several times.

***Super Hot-Blooded Baseball Kid*** *— LV3 Fire Warrior (500 ATK)*

“Baseball Kid’s ability activates now,” Shougo went on. “For every fire-attribute monster on the field, he gains 1000 attack points. You have two fire monsters, so that’s 2500 attack points for him.”

***Super Hot-Blooded Baseball Kid*** *+2000 ATK (2500 ATK)*

“That’s very nice, Shougo-kun… taking advantage of my field like that. But you can’t attack any of my Command Knights, and my Warrior Lady will barely take any damage. Plus, because of her effect, you’ll lose your monster too.”

“That’s what you think. I play ‘Raise Dead’.”

The ankh-themed card rose on the field. Shougo described the card’s effect. “I can revive one card, whether it be a friend or an enemy. I’ll revive your

Command Knight, Chiba-san, and bring her to my side of the field!”

Chiba gasped in surprise as his duel disk’s cemetery slot glowed. Light shot out of it into Shougo’s side of the field, and the Command Knight materialized there.

***Command Knight*** *— 1200 ATK + 400 (1600 ATK)*
***Super Hot-Blooded Baseball Kid*** *+1000 ATK (3500 ATK)*

“So you got another fire monster. But still, the attack bonus you get won’t be enough to finish the game. Anything can happen in the next turn… you shouldn’t announce your victory so early.”

Shougo just smiled slightly. “You’re forgetting something, Chiba-san. Baseball Kid is a warrior type monster also!”

Chiba blinked. Then he put two and two together. “That means…”

“That means that Super Hot Blooded Baseball Kid gets 400 more points in addition to the 1000 points he gets from Command Knight. That brings his attack power up to…”

***Super Hot-Blooded Baseball Kid*** *+400 ATK (3900 ATK)*

“3900!” Chiba stepped back, amazed.

A twinkle appeared in Shougo’s eye. “GO! Baseball Kid… attack his Warrior Lady and finish the duel! Ultimate IPPATSU!”

The monster threw a flaming baseball in the air and with mighty force, struck it with his bat towards the Warrior Lady. She shouted and exploded as Chiba’s life points dropped to zero.

***Chiba*** *— 1600 LP — 0 LP*

*Just barely… if I had survived, I could have used her effect to get rid of that Baseball Kid. Then…*

Chiba laughed. *Oh well, what can you do?*

Shougo lowered his Duel Disk and walked to his opponent, offering him a hand. Chiba took the hand gratefully and got on to his feet.

“That was great, Shougo!” Chiba said, reaching out to shake his roommate’s hand. “And you won without Dark Armed Dragon, too. Nobody can say you only win because of rare cards now.”

“That’s what you think,” Shougo said, looking dourly at the offered hand. “I’ve already heard what they’re saying. I got a lucky hand, that’s all they think. I’ll never get their respect.”

“Is that what you hear? Well, forget them,” Chiba replied. “They’ll come around, in time. You just worry about the people in front of you, and don’t worry so much about the people behind you. Okay?”

Shougo glanced at his roommate, and then at the hand. He briefly thought that maybe, just maybe, he shouldn’t worry so much about what people think of him. That maybe that was a key to getting respect that he’d overlooked for a long time.

He grasped the offered hand and shook it firmly.

“Alright then, Chiba-kun,” he said.

Chiba then high fived his newfound friend.

“Awesome, Shougo-kun!!”

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Three female Obelisk Blue students were walking away from the Osiris dorms; one walked ahead of the others. The ones behind her looked somewhat similar to each other, although one had a ponytail.

“That was a waste of time,” one of them muttered. “Just two commoners having a duel.”

“Yes, Toragami-sama, why did you make us go out there?” the ponytailed one asked.

“That was Aoyama Shougo,” Toragami, the young woman ahead of them, replied. “He was the last duelist in the Academia entrance exams this year.”

“The one who put up a fight against Tenjouin-sensei?” asked the girl with the ponytail.

“Yes, Katsuki, him.”

“Well, you could see for yourself, couldn’t you?” the other girl said. “That boy just got lucky. He could barely manage a win against a second-year Osiris, so what’s your interest in him?”

“It wasn’t luck, Aino.”

Aino and Katsuki paused and looked at each other.

“The power of the cards he uses are the powers of darkness,” Toragami said. “The powers of the past. Couldn’t you feel the desperate aura emanating from his monsters?”

Toragami's companions sighed, appearing to expect this kind of behavior from their companion, although not understanding it.

"Weak people who fear the light run to the darkness and find their strength there," Toragami went on. "But that is not real power. True warriors do not fear the light, they embrace it! This behavior from a duelist who dared to appear to put up a challenge against one of my idols… unforgivable! He must understand his place."

Katsuki sighed. "She's going on about the light again."

"Let her," Aino replied. "Champions have the right to be a little eccentric."

*Just you wait,* Toragami thought to herself. *I'm going to force you to see your strength for what it really is… nothingness!*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD:** *The Effect Monster, "Super Hot-Blooded Baseball Kid"*
This card's ATK power goes up by 1000 points for every Fire-attribute Monster on the field. You can send a Fire-attribute monster you control other than

this card to the Cemetery in order to inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent.

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**Chiba:** “That was a great duel, wasn’t it?”
**Shougo:** “Not now, Chiba-kun… we have to do the preview for the next episode. And I don’t like this one!”
**Chiba:** “Shougo-kun gets a challenge from a student who is also a legend… the undefeated Japanese champion who’s never lost a battle!”
**Shougo:** “Why me?”
**Chiba:** “Meanwhile, Tenjouin-sensei looks into the background of her new student, and finds… nothing? Where does this boy come from?”
**Shougo:** “Don’t distract me, Chiba-kun! I have to get ready for this next battle!”
**Chiba:** “Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *‘The Challenge from the Blitzkrieg Queen’!”***
**Shougo:** “If she’s going to look down on me too, then I guess I just can’t lose!”

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**NEWDORIA**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, destroy 1 monster on the field.

**BLAZES OF DEMISE (Fires of Doomsday)**
*Instant Magic*
You may not Summon monsters on the turn you activate this card. Special Summon 2 “Demise Tokens” (LV1 Dark Demon, 0/0) in Defense position. These tokens cannot be Tributed for the Tribute Summon of a non-Dark-Attribute Monster.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON (Red-Eyes B. Dragon)**
*Normal Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
A ferocious dragon with a deadly attack.

**PHANTOM OF DARKNESS (Dark Illusion)**
*Counter Trap*
Negate the activation of a Magic Card, Trap Card or Effect Monster that targets a face-up Dark-attribute Monster, and destroy that card.

**FOOLISH BURIAL**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Monster card in your deck and send it to the cemetery.

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**

*Effect Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*

This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

**DARK DIMENSION'S RELEASE (Escape from the Dark Dimension)**

*Continuous Trap*

Select 1 Dark-Attribute Monster that is removed from play and Special Summon it. When this card is removed from the field, destroy that monster. When that monster is destroyed, destroy this card.

**ALLURE OF DARKNESS**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 2 cards from your deck. Remove 1 Dark-attribute monster in your hand from play. If you cannot do this, discard your entire hand.

**DARK DRAGON HATCHLING (Red-Eyes B. Chick)**

*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Dragon, 800/500)*

By sending this face-up card from the field to the Cemetery, Special Summon 1 "Red-Eyes Black Dragon" from your hand.

**POT OF GREED**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**SUPER HOT-BLOODED BASEBALL KID (Ultimate Baseball Kid)**
*Effect Monster (L3 Fire Warrior, 500/1000)*
This card gains 1000 ATK for each other Fire-attribute Monster on the field. You can send 1 Fire-attribute Monster you control other than this card to the cemetery to inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent.

**RAISE DEAD (Monster Reborn)**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Monster in either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

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CARDS USED BY KATSUROU CHIBA:

**COMMAND KNIGHT**
*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Warrior, 1200/1900)*
While this card is face-up on the field, all Warrior-type Monsters you control gain 400 ATK. When there is 1 Monster card on the field other than this card, your opponent cannot select "Command Knight" as an attack target.

**LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**

*Effect Monster (L3 Earth Angel, 800/1200)*

When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, Special Summon 1 Level 4 or lower Warrior-type Monster from your deck to the field.

**BATTLE ZONE**

*Counter Trap*

During the turn this card is activated, all monsters that are destroyed are considered to be destroyed as a result of battle. Effect Monsters that target and destroy your monsters become the target of any resulting effects.

**ROGUE MERCENARIES (Exiled Force)**

*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1000/1000)*

By Tributing this card, destroy 1 monster on the field.

**ARCHDEMON AXE (Axe of Despair)**

*Equip Magic*

Raise the ATK of the equipped Monster by 1000. If this card is destroyed, you may Tribute 1 Monster on the field to send this card from the cemetery to the top of your deck.

**PITFALL TO HADES (Bottomless Trap Hole)**

*Normal Trap*

If a Monster with 1500 ATK or more is Summoned onto the field, destroy and remove from play that Monster.

**POT OF GREED**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**CRAZY SUMMON GEAR**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 Monster on your opponent's side of the field. They must summon from their deck as many monsters as possible with the same Level and Type as the selected monster. Then, choose 1 Monster Card in your cemetery with 1500 ATK or less and Special Summon, from your cemetery, deck or hand, as many monsters as possible with the same name as that card.

**DIFFERENT DIMENSION WARRIOR LADY (D.D. Warrior Lady)**

*Effect Monster (L4 Light Warrior, 1500/1600)*

When this card is in battle with an opponent's monster, after damage calculation you may remove from play this card and the opponent's monster card.

# 3. The Challenge from the Blitzkrieg Queen

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
**Turn Three: *"The Challenge from the Blitzkrieg Queen"***

---

It had been about a week since Shougo Aoyama first entered Duel Academia.

As a student, he was strictly average and some of the teachers tended to focus on him during in-class questions because of rumors that he had done well against Asuka Tenjouin. Students mainly picked on him because he was an Osiris. He avoided confrontation and never got in trouble.

Asuka Tenjouin herself remained curious about the duelist, whom she saw as an enigma.

Monday, she was teaching a class about Basic Dueling.

“Today, I’ll be teaching about Sacrifice. When you summon monsters that are level 4 or below, normally sacrifice is not required. But higher level monsters do require sacrifice. This balances the power out and assures that players cannot win by simply holding and drawing powerful cards first, as was often the case in the early days of Duel Monsters.”

She then showed a card. “This is the Dark Magician of Chaos. Can anyone tell me how many monsters you need to sacrifice to summon it?”

Several hands rose into the air. “Perhaps an Osiris Red student?” Tenjouin asked, and some hands went down. “Aoyama-kun?”

Shougo stood up and grumbled. He knew the answer, but didn't want to stand out. "Umm… uhh…" He sighed. "Two?"

"That is the correct answer," Tenjouin said. "Good job."

Shougo sat down and heard people around him whisper about the "lucky duelist" and the "luck-sacking duelist".

"Now there are some exceptions to this rule," Tenjouin went on. "Some high-level monsters can be summoned without requiring sacrifice. Can anyone give me an example of this?"

A solitary hand went up.

"Toragami-san?"

"The Cyber Dragon can be special summoned without sacrifice if the opponent controls one or more monsters and you control none," she said. "And then you can sacrifice that for a level 5 or 6 monster."

Hinata Toragami was a rather plain-looking girl in an Obelisk Blue blazer. Her hair was black and short and her eyes were grey and narrow.

“Good job, Toragami-san. I’m going to have my assistant pass out the results for the tests you turned in yesterday. You’ve all done well in this class.”

Tenjouin’s assistant gave out papers to the whole class. Shougo received his test, which was a 75 — perfectly average. But there was also a note on it: *Please see me after class*.

Shougo gulped.

After class ended, Shougo lingered behind, trying to hide the fact that he had been summoned to see the teacher after class. Some students noticed, though, and he sighed to himself, knowing he’d hear about it later.

When all the students had left, Tenjouin beckoned her student.

“Tenjouin-sensei?” Shougo asked timidly.

“It’s nothing about your work, Aoyama-kun, although I do wish you’d try to improve…” she replied.

“If it’s about my behavior during the entrance exam, I’m really sorry,” Shougo stammered. “I don’t know what comes over me sometimes, but when I play, I…”

Tenjouin stopped him. “Don’t worry about that. It’s all over and done with, and you’re my student now. Actually, I heard a lot of students have been giving you a hard time over that exam.”

“Well… not really. I… keep to myself, mostly.”

“You should take a chance and reach out more,” Tenjouin replied. “You might be surprised. You know, I have made a lot of friends because I dueled them. It’s not necessarily true that your opponent has to be your enemy.”

“Yes, sensei,” Shougo said, looking down.

“You’re just trying to get out of this situation as quickly as possible.” The teacher chuckled. “It’s alright. I understand. It must be hard being in unfamiliar surroundings, right?”

“Unfamiliar… surroundings?” Shougo looked dazed suddenly, as if he were trying to understand his teacher’s words and not succeeding.

“Yes, you’re far from home. You’re from Domino, right?”

“Yeah… Domino City.” Shougo’s expression became a relieved one, something which made Tenjouin all the more curious.

“Take it easy. It will take some time to adjust. Maybe write your parents a letter?”

Shougo went blank again. “I… I don’t have parents,” he said.

Tenjouin held back a wince. *Damn. I should have remembered that from the file.*

“I’m sorry, Aoyama-kun. Go ahead and go back to your dorm now.”

Shougo nodded and started to leave; but when he reached the doorway, he paused and turned around.

“Tenjouin-sensei?”

“Yes, Aoyama-kun?” Tenjouin asked.

“One thing that I wanted to know. During our duel… that last card… what was it?”

“Oh.” Tenjouin smiled and opened her deck. She pulled out the card and showed it to Shougo — “The Warrior Returning Alive”.

Shougo’s face fell. He recalled that during their duel, Tenjouin had played “Fusion Recovery” so she had a Fusion card. She would have gotten Cyber Blader back, and since Shougo had 2 monsters, she would have won.

“Don’t feel bad,” Tenjouin attempted to encourage her student. “Even if I’d won, you still impressed everyone with your duel. Keep doing your best!”

Shougo nodded, not really believing her. “Thanks, sensei. I’ll go now.”

Tenjouin watched Shougo depart, his eyes cast to the ground, and sighed. *That child has it hard. I can’t believe I didn’t remember that his parents had…*

She then did a double take. *Come to think of it… I don’t think his file mentioned anything about his parents.* She touched a finger to her chin. *This boy makes me wonder…*

---

Shougo was stopped from leaving the school grounds by two girls; one with somewhat long blonde hair tied in a ponytail, the other with a short cut brown do. They were both Obelisks.

“Hold it, Shougo,” the brown-haired one said.

“Uh…” Shougo looked up at the students. “Who are you?”

“I’m Aino Naomi,” the ponytailed girl said. “And this is Katsuki Shiho.”

Shougo tried to meet their gaze. “Do you need something?”

“This note is for you,” Aino said simply, thrusting a piece of paper towards Shougo.

“What?” Shougo was utterly confused, disliking social situations.

“Just read it,” Katsuki said, her short temper obvious.

Shougo opened the note and read it as asked. It read *Toragami Hinata hereby challenges Aoyama Shougo to a duel by the lighthouse at midnight. If you are a duelist, you will show up.*

“What?!” Shougo did a double take.

“Don’t worry, this time the whole school won’t be watching you get humiliated,” Katsuki grinned. “Just us!”

The two girls then walked off, laughing to themselves.

*Toragami Hinata… that girl from class today,* Shougo thought to himself. *Maybe Chiba-kun knows*

*something about her…*

---

Back at the dorm rooms, Chiba was in total shock when Shougo presented him with the note. “Toragami Hinata? You don’t know who she is?!”

“No…”

“You… you…” He paused. The words ‘Have you been living under a rock?’ weren’t appropriate with Shougo, he thought. So he collected himself and verified it. “You really don’t know abot the Toragami Zaibatsu?”

“No.”

Chiba adjusted his glasses. “The Toragami family has been around for quite awhile, but only recently started showing an interest in Duel Monsters. Like the Manjoume Group before them, they want to dominate the world of Duel Monsters. To that end, they’ve produced a duelist like none other…”

Shougo looked somewhat nervous now. “Toragami… Hinata? A girl?”

“Some people call her the Blitzkrieg Queen, although I think that’s somewhat of a misnomer,”

Chiba said. “Blitzes are fast and don’t let up, and from what I hear, Toragami-san plays slow at first, but then comes out in the end to destroy her opponents. It might be just a clever name, but… I’m told she has never been defeated.”

“Never been defeated?” Shougo’s eyes widened and he glanced at his deck.

“Well, since she’s started playing Duel Monsters competitively, she hasn’t entered a tournament. Only exhibition matches, and those are only seen by a select few. But yes… she’s never lost. I mean… to get a challenge from her… you must have made an impression.”

Shougo sat down on his bed and pondered the issue. “Maybe… maybe you’re right, Chiba-kun. Maybe I shouldn’t go…”

“Now hold on a second there, Shougo-kun!” Chiba corrected him. “When did I ever say you shouldn’t go? Quite the opposite! This is an opportunity you shouldn’t turn down!”

Shougo’s eyes widened as he turned to his roommate. “Chiba-kun…”

“You’ve got a chance to play one of the greatest up-and-comers! I’d never forgive you if you turned

it down! I wish I had an invite from the Blitzkrieg Queen herself. She's practically a legend!"

Shougo put his hands into his pockets and sighed. "Looks like you're not leaving me a choice again."

---

Asuka Tenjouin stared at the ceiling as she lay in bed.

"Aoyama Shougo… who are you?"

After class, out of curiosity she had checked his file, and indeed no information on his life before coming to Duel Academia was offered. She checked the school information system online and found nothing more.

*It's one thing if his parents died. That would be in the file. But nothing whatsoever? This is very strange. Perhaps the Chancellor knows something.*

Tenjouin bit her lip and thought back to her time as a student in Duel Academia. It was a time full of dangerous, unknown situations and some amount of intrigue. She feared that sort of thing happening again, and to her students, even.

“It’s my job to protect these children,” she said quietly aloud. “I have to do what I can.”

*But you have other classes to teach,* she reminded herself. *This has to wait until the morning.*

Tenjouin sighed. She was a responsible adult now — she couldn’t go running off at the slightest implication. She grabbed her lesson plan and looked over it.

*This is certainly going to stick in my mind until I take care of it, though…*

---

As night started to fall, Shougo laid awake in bed, staring up at the roof. He had taken the top bunk; Chiba offered it to him, of course.

Chiba was using his handheld computer, and then he paused and turned towards Shougo.

“Don’t worry too much, Shougo-kun,” he said. “No matter what happens, it will be a good game.”

“I wasn’t really thinking about that,” Shougo sighed. “But… thanks for the concern.”

“Oh… maybe you’re feeling homesick?”

Shougo furrowed his brow.

“Come to think of it,” Chiba said. “I don’t know much about where you came from… I mean, we just met and all so you don’t know much about me either. Now’s as good a time as any.”

“I’d like to tell you, Chiba-kun, but the truth is… I don’t remember much.”

“Oh.”

“My parents died when I was young, and I had to fend for myself.”

“Oh, really? You didn’t go to an orphanage?”

“I… don’t remember. I just know I loved Duel Monsters. Except I never had any confidence. Until the day I got that card.”

Chiba clicked his handheld computer off. “You mean the Dark Armed Dragon?”

“No… the Red-Eyes. My favorite card. But I still had no confidence. Then… I met him. Mutou Yugi.”

Chiba gasped in utter surprise. “No way! You met the Duel King?”

“He tried to teach me something, but I don’t think I’ve learned it yet. I’m still scared. I’ve forced myself to fight, but it hasn’t worked out well for me. But I’m still gonna try until I learn that lesson.”

“Forcing yourself isn’t good, Shougo-kun,” Chiba replied. “You’ll just be more frightened when the time comes where you have to do it.”

“I know!” Shougo cried and clenched his fists. “But it’s better than just not doing anything at all.”

Chiba smiled. “That could be right, too,” he said. “Just try to keep your thoughts still until you duel Toragami.”

Shougo nodded and went back to looking at the ceiling. *Is she really that tough? If so, I have to win… I can’t lose.*

---

The lighthouse shone sporadically on the two duelists and their friends as they approached the meeting place.

“Good job for showing up, dropout boy,” Katsuki sneered. “I thought that as soon as you heard who Toragami-sama was, you’d stay hiding at home.”

“You owe me lunch tomorrow,” Aino reminded her friend.

Toragami said nothing; instead, she took out her deck and walked towards Shougo.

“Well, I came,” Shougo said, walking as well to meet his opponent halfway. “I’m not a coward like you think, and I’m not just lucky like everyone says I am.”

They met and shuffled each other’s decks. Toragami’s eyes never left Shougo’s; he looked down to Toragami’s deck as he shuffled them, then gave them back to her. When their gazes finally met, Shougo felt a twinge of nervousness at her resolve.

Toragami then finally spoke. “Tell me something, Shougo. When your fight against Tenjouin-sama was stopped… do you believe you would have won if the duel continued?”

“Wha…?” Shougo frowned. “What does it matter?”

“It was just a question,” Toragami said, and then they exchanged decks again.

She then walked away, and held out her arm. Katsuki ran over to where she was and placed the

Duel Disk on her arm.

“Katsuki, Aino,” Toragami ordered the two. “Stand with the other Osiris Red boy that came.”

“Yes, Toragami-sama,” Katsuki said, as she and Aino did as told, standing next to Chiba. They didn’t bother to greet him.

Chiba did. “I’m Chiba Katsurou,” he said and mustered a smile.

“Nice to meet you,” Aino said politely.

“Likewise,” Katsuki added. Her voice was much colder and laced with contempt.

Shougo and Toragami both turned on their duel disks and faced each other.

Shougo narrowed his eyes. *I can tell this girl, whoever she is… is looking down on me. I’ll defeat her and make her acknowledge me as a duelist!*

“Duel!” they both shouted.

“My turn,” Toragami said flatly. “Draw. I summon Lightlord Paladin Jean in attack mode.”

A shining white-haired female warrior clad in white metallic armor rose onto the field.

***Lightlord Paladin Jean*** *— LV4 Light Warrior (1800 ATK)*

Toragami drew two cards from the top of her deck and placed them in the cemetery slot. “Turn end.”

“W… what is she doing?” Chiba asked.

“I wouldn’t expect an Osiris Red to underst…” Katsuki started, but Aino stopped her.

“Lightlord Paladin Jean’s effect forces Toragami-sama to discard two cards on each of her end phases,” Aino explained.

“That seems like a heavy price to pay,” Chiba mused. “She’s not even that strong for a level 4.”

Katsuki clicked her tongue. “It’s a pity. I thought we were going to see her ‘Dark Destruction Deck’, but I guess Toragami-sama’s decided this boy isn’t worth it.”

“‘Dark Destruction Deck’…?” Chiba asked, but then decided not to press further.

Shougo put his hand on his deck and drew. “It seems like I might be able to finish this now,” he said.

Katsuki and Aino gasped while Toragami just watched silently.

---

A receptionist in the Chancellor's office was filing her nails when Tenjouin came in. She quickly put away the file and tried to appear as though she was working.

"Hello, Tenjouin-sama," she said. 'How may I help you?' She then noticed Tenjouin's face betrayed a lack of sleep, and she became concerned. "Are you alright? Perhaps you should visit the nurse's office."

"I'm alright, thank you," Tenjouin replied and smiled. "I'd like to see the Chancellor, please."

"Chancellor Kiyotaki is in a meeting, but I'll tell him you wanted to see him."

Tenjouin sighed. "Alright," she said. "Just tell him it concerns one of my students and I'd like to hear from him as soon as possible."

"Would that student happen to be Aoyama Shougo?" a male voice called from behind the receptionist.

Tenjouin blinked and turned, setting eyes on the Chancellor for the first time. A man who appeared to be just hitting 40, a full head of slightly graying hair, but otherwise looked relatively youthful. His name was Naoyuki Kiyotaki, but most people at Duel Academia simply called him “Chancellor”.

He was rarely seen by anyone on campus.

“Chancellor Kiyotaki?” Tenjouin said with some surprise. “Aren’t you in a meeting?”

“I tell my receptionist to tell people that. But I should have told her to expect your coming… I thought you might have some questions.”

Tenjouin just nodded.

“I’d be pleased to answer your questions. But first I must insist that you head back to your room and get some sleep. Come see me in the morning and perhaps I’ll answer your questions.”

Tenjouin raised an eyebrow. “Perhaps?”

Instead of responsing to the question, Kiyotaki turned back towards his office. *I suppose he is right,* she thought. *I’ve had a long day, it’s probably better I rest.* She started to head back as well.

“One more thing,” Kiyotaki added.

“Hm?”

“Bring your deck.”

Tenjouin’s eyes widened. “Why, Chancellor?”

But he was already gone, and with nothing else to do, Tenjouin went back to her room.

---

“I summon Killer Tomato in attack mode!” Shougo announced. “Killer Tomato! Attack Toragami-san’s Paladin!”

A giant vegetable with an evil face appeared on the field and rushed towards Toragami’s Paladin.

***Killer Tomato*** *— LV4 Dark Plant (1400 ATK)*

With a quick slash of the Paladin’s sword, it was destroyed.

***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP — 400 — 3600 LP*

“Killer Tomato’s special effect activates,” Shougo said. “I can summon a Dark-attribute monster with 1500 attack points or below from my deck in attack mode. The one I’ll choose is of course, another Killer Tomato. Attack again!”

“This boy is dumber than I thought!” Katsuki shouted. “Sending in small fries to destroy Toragami’s monsters!”

“He’s got a plan,” Chiba said, not explaining any further. He’d already figured out Shougo’s intent when the Tomato hit the field in attack mode; but did his opponent know?

The second tomato was destroyed and replaced with another one, which also attacked and was promptly obliterated.

***Shougo** — 3600 LP — 400 — 3200 LP*
***Shougo** — 3200 LP — 400 — 2800 LP*

“Special summon Giant Virus,” Shougo said.

***Giant Virus** — LV2 Dark Demon (1000 ATK)*

“And that’s it for my Battle Phase. Now, since I have three Dark monsters in the cemetery, I can bring Dark Armed Dragon to the field!”

***Dark Armed Dragon** — LV7 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

Chiba nodded. *It’s a good plan, but I don’t think you’ve realized who your opponent is,* he said. *You’ve lost 1200 life points to bring out your trump card this early.*

“I remove one of my Killer Tomatoes from the cemetery,” Shougo said, retrieving the card and placing it in his pocket. “Dark Armed Dragon! Use Dark Genocide to destroy her Paladin!”

The dragon roared and threw two bolts of dark energy at the light warrior, who tried to shield herself but was destroyed.

“I set one card facedown and end my turn,” Shougo said. “You can’t look down on me because I’m an Osiris. I’m going to defeat you!”

Toragami’s face was fixed in a slight frown, and she didn’t respond. Instead, she reached for her deck.

“Don’t let her shake you up, Shougo-kun,” Chiba shouted. “You can do it!”

“Honestly, you’re such a cheerleader,” Katsuki chuckled. “You should be captain of my squad!”

Chiba groaned.

“My turn,” Toragami said simply. “Draw.”

She then displayed a card from her hand. “I activate ‘Solar Exchange’, and discard a Lightlord Paladin Jean from my hand to draw two cards.” She

drew two, placed them in her hand, and then drew two more.

“Hey, what are you doing?” Shougo demanded.

Toragami placed the other two cards into her cemetery. “After I activate ‘Solar Exchange’ I must discard the top two cards in my deck. Now I play ‘Lightning Vortex’ and discard a ‘Holy Barrier — Mirror Force’ from my hand.”

“Lightning Vortex?!” Chiba shouted in disbelief. “That super rare card?”

“Are you really that surprised?” Katsuki said. “For someone from a wealthy zaibatsu like Toragami-sama, having a card like that is to be expected.”

Chiba grumbled. “It’s really unfair that you can have that kind of advantage simply by having money.”

“Like your friend is any better!” Aino shot back. “He didn’t even have to pay any extra money for that damn dragon of his! Many families have to pay millions for that one card!”

Several bolts of lightning struck Shougo’s side of the field. His Virus and his prize card, the Dark

Armed Dragon, were struck full on and shattered.

"No!" Shougo shouted as he drew his arm back.

*His field is empty and he's wide open,* Chiba thought to himself. *And worse yet, Toragami-san hasn't summoned a monster. With his life points already lowered from what he did to summon Dark Armed Dragon… he's in real trouble now.*

Shougo just stared hard at Toragami, whose face conveyed no emotion as she prepared to make her move.

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster Card, "Killer Tomato"***
Level 4, 1400 attack points, 1100 defense points. When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, you can bring out from your deck a Dark-attribute monster of 1500 attack points or less in attack position. You can get out the monster you want with this card!

---

**Toragami:** "Is that all you have for me?"
**Chiba:** "Shougo-kun is in a real pinch in the next

episode. Not only has he lost his ace, but Toragami is able to summon many monsters to attack him. But what's this? Shougo has a surprise?"
**Katsuki:** "Don't act as though he makes a comeback. Toragami-sama is undefeatable!"
**Chiba:** "That's what you think! Next he's going to show you the real power that he has in his heart!"
**Katsuki:** "Don't screw around! Nothing of the sort will happen once Toragami-sama summons her own ace!"
**Aino:** "Next time, on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *'The Blinding Light of Judgment Dragoon'***.
**Toragami:**" Aoyama Shougo… disappear here."

---

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**KILLER TOMATO (Mystic Tomato)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Plant, 1400/1100)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, you may Special Summon 1 Dark-attribute monster with 1500 ATK or less from your Deck in Attack Position.

**GIANT VIRUS (Giant Germ)**
*Effect Monster (L2 Dark Demon, 1000/100)*

When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent. You may also Special Summon up to 2 “Giant Virus” Cards from your Deck in Attack Position.

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

---

CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI:

**LIGHTLORD PALADIN JEAN (Lightsworn Paladin Jean)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1800/1200)*
When this card attacks a monster, it gains 300 ATK during the Damage Step. During your End Phase, send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**SOLAR EXCHANGE**
*Normal Magic*
Send 1 “Lightlord” Monster Card from your hand to

the cemetery to draw 2 cards from your deck. Then, send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTNING VORTEX**

*Normal Magic*

Discard 1 card from your hand. Destroy all face-up monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE (Mirror Force)**

*Normal Trap*

Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Destroy all Attack Position monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

# 4. The Blinding Light of Judgment Dragoon

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"Now I play 'Lightning Vortex'," Toragami declared. "And discard a 'Holy Barrier — Mirror Force' from my hand."

Several bolts of lightning struck Shougo's side of the field. His Virus and his prize card, the Dark Armed Dragon, were struck full on and shattered.

"No!" Shougo shouted as he drew his arm back.

*His field is empty and he's wide open*, Chiba thought to himself. *And worse yet, Toragami-san hasn't summoned a monster. With his life points already lowered from what he did to summon Dark Armed Dragon… he's in real trouble now.*

Shougo just stared hard at Toragami, whose face conveyed no emotion as she prepared to make her move.

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
**Turn Four: *"The Blinding Light of Judgment Dragoon"***

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"I summon Lightlord Summoner Luminous in attack mode," Toragami went on after her Vortex did its job. "By discarding one card from my hand, I can summon a Lightlord monster from the cemetery. I place 'Holy Life Barrier' in the cemetery to special summon Lightlord Warrior Garoth."

A dark-skinned light-haired woman appeared on the field, holding a staff. She then rose her staff in the air, and next to her emerged a warrior, similarly

armored to Jean. He drew his sword, ready for battle.

***Lightlord Summoner Luminous*** *— LV3 Light Spellcaster (1000 ATK)*
***Lightlord Warrior Garoth*** *— LV4 Light Warrior (1850 ATK)*

“She’s discarding all her good traps to summon these monsters,” Chiba muttered. “And when was that Garoth guy destroyed anyway?”

“Pay attention, dropout boy,” Katsuki harrumphed. “He went into the cemetery when Toragami-sama played ‘Solar Exchange’.”

“Battle phase begin,” Toragami said. “Luminous, attack Shougo directly.”

Luminous raised her staff and it began to glow. After a moment, a beam of light shot and struck Shougo, inflicting 1000 points of damage and leaving his Life Points at 1800.

***Shougo*** *— 2800 LP — 1000 — 1800 LP*

“Oh no!” Chiba gasped. “If Garoth’s attack gets through, he’s finished!”

“Too bad,” Katsuki sighed. “This was barely worth coming out for.”

Toragami then pointed. “Garoth, follow up. Direct attack on Shougo!”

The warrior held his sword aloft and rushed Shougo. He stared intently as the monster rushed his side of the field.

“I was waiting for this. Reverse card open… ‘Drain Shield’! Your attack is negated, and I gain life points equal to your warrior’s attack points!”

An energy barrier absorbed Garoth’s blow, and he fell back. Shougo’s Life Points went up to 3650, a steady amount.

***Shougo*** *— 1800 LP + 1850 — 3650 LP*

“I bet you thought you had me,” Shougo smirked. “But it’s not over yet.”

Toragami was unmoved. “I set two cards. Now, because of Lightlord Summoner Luminous, I must discard three cards from my deck.” She then did so, placing three cards into the graveyard. Her duel disk then shone, and an image of a white-haired humanoid wolf appeared on her side of the field.

***Lightlord Beast Wolf*** *— LV4 Light Beast (2100 ATK)*

“What the hell is that?” Shougo shouted.

“When I discard Lightlord Beast Wolf from my deck, I can Special Summon it,” Toragami explained.

“2100 attack points,” Chiba noted, impressed. “Unless Shougo gets a powerful monster this turn, he’s not going to be able to deal with it.”

“This scrub is totally outclassed,” Katsuki said with a smirk.

“Now I activate Lightlord Warrior Garoth’s effect,” Toragami went on. “When I discard because of a Lightlord effect, I can discard two more. And if I discard Lightlord monsters, I can draw one card for each one.”

She then drew two more cards and showed them to her opponent — ‘Lightlord Hunter Raikou’ and ‘Justice World’. Placing them in her graveyard, she drew one card.

“She’s going to run out of cards if she keeps playing this way,” Chiba observed.

Katsuki and Aino just looked at each other and smiled knowingly.

“My turn. Draw!” Shougo took a card out of his deck, looked at it and smiled again. “I guess luck

favors me. ‘Sealing Swords of Light’… activate!”

Several energy blades of pure light appeared around Toragami’s field.

“Great, Shougo-kun!” Chiba shouted, thrusting his fist. “This will give you time to plan your strategy!”

“Impudent brat,” Katsuki muttered. “He’s only hiding.”

But Aino was silent. She’d hoped something like this wouldn’t happen, but it had. Indeed, Toragami was showing signs of emotion for the first time in this duel, her frown deepening.

“And I summon Blood Vorse in attack mode, as well,” Shougo said, as the axe-wielding fiend emerged on the field.

***Blood Vorse*** *— LV4 Dark Beast-Warrior (1900 ATK)*

“Blood Vorse, dispatch that Luminous whatever!”

Blood Vorse roared and was ready to rush its target, but Toragami flipped her facedown card. “Reverse card open, ‘Command Silencer’. Your attack is negated, and I draw one card.”

Soundwaves emitted from her card, and Shougo's monster was unable to launch its attack.

"Turn end," Shougo muttered.

"What's wrong?" Toragami said, her voice quiet and deadly. "Were you saying something about how you're going to win?"

"Hey, don't get angry because I got a good card," Shougo shot back, but then his eyes met Toragami's and he froze. Her gaze was cold as steel, and he could feel something powerful and fearsome in those eyes.

"This battle will not last long enough for your swords to make a difference." Toragami pulled a card from her deck, and Shougo got a chill.

*She's planning to make a fool of me*, he thought. *I won't let her. I'll win this! I will win this!*

"I discard Lightlord Hunter Raikou from my hand to revive Lightlord Paladin Jean in defense mode," Toragami announced. Luminous rose her staff and brought forth the monster she summoned at the beginning onto the field.

***Lightlord Paladin Jean*** *(1200 DEF)*

Chiba whistled, thoroughly impressed. “Four monsters!”

“I switch Garoth and Luminous to defense as well and end my turn,” Toragami went on.

***Lightlord Warrior Garoth*** *(1300 DEF)*
***Lightlord Summoner Luminous*** *(1000 DEF)*

Shougo watched disdainfully as most of his opponent’s monsters took a defensive stance. “All your talk must have been a front,” he said. “I heard you were some kind of super duelist, but all you’ve been doing is dumping cards and now you’re playing defense. I’ll get the card I need to win soon!”

“‘Dumping’ cards?”

Toragami seemed to take umbrage at that remark.

“Well, isn’t that what you’re doing?” Shougo asked.

“The true warrior knows and understands the necessity of sacrifice,” Toragami replied, her voice starting to rise. “That is the meaning of my deck. Somebody like you couldn’t begin to understand. You hide in the darkness, afraid to search for your true power, only using the light when it suits you.

Look at yourself! You think you've held me back with this pathetic barrier of yours?"

Shougo chuckled. "All this talk is going to make you look sillier when you lose," he said.

Toragami crossed her arms and shook her hung head. "I'm deeply disappointed. I thought I was going to find a warrior but instead I find a boy playing children's games."

Shougo bit his lip hard in anger. *I have no choice. I'm going to win this,* he thought to himself. *I have to! I can't let this girl make a fool out of me in this way!*

"Lightlord Summoner Luminous' effect activates on my end phase," Toragami said as she drew three cards and placed them in her graveyard. "And now I'll use Garoth's effect as well," she continued, dumping two more cards.

Chiba was paying attention this time. "She didn't discard any Lightlords," he said. "But if another Beast Wolf gets sent, it'll be a problem."

"And next, Lightlord Paladin Jean will cause me to discard another two cards," Toragami went on, placing another two cards from the top of her deck

into the cemetery slot. “And I’ll use Garoth’s effect again.”

She drew two cards and showed them to Shougo. “Lightlord Magician Leila and Lightlord Beast Wolf,” she said. “I will draw two cards, and then special summon another Beast Wolf to the field.”

Another Beast Wolf appeared next to the one already on the field, filling out Toragami’s line of monsters.

***Lightlord Beast Wolf*** *(2100 ATK)*

Shougo muttered and placed his hand on his deck. He tried to remember what he had been shown that day in Domino City. *I’ll be a respected duelist, just like Yugi-san,* he thought to himself. *And I won’t be afraid.*

“My turn…” he said, focusing all his thoughts on winning. ‘Draw! I play ‘Pot of Greed’.’ He drew two more cards. “And now I’ll play ‘Monster Reincarnation’.”

He then sighed. He had Red-Eyes Black Dragon and Meteor Dragon in his hand, but nothing to fuse them together with. His only choice was to place Meteor in the graveyard. But then he could summon the monster that would help him win the match.

“I place Meteor Dragon into the cemetery to return Dark Armed Dragon to my hand,” he said. “And with three dark monsters sleeping in the grave, I can revive him! Come out, my dragon!”

Darkness surrounded the area where the giant, fearsome dragon emerged from, as it bared its metallic claws to battle once again.

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *(2800 ATK)*

Chiba nodded slightly. He knew Shougo wanted to avoid having to use that monster too often, but against someone as talented as Toragami-sama, he probably had no choice.

“I remove all three dark monsters in my cemetery from play,” Shougo shouted. “To destroy your Jean, Luminous and Garoth! Dark Armed Dragon! Destroy them with Dark Genocide!”

The giant dragon threw his dark energy beams three times, two from either arm, which each converged on the defending Lightlords, destroying them.

“That’s all well and good,” Katsuki said in a mocking tone. “But he should have destroyed Toragami-sama’s facedown card.”

As much as Toragami's cheerleaders annoyed Chiba, he had to admit they were right. That facedown could destroy Shougo's entire plan.

"And she still has two Beast Wolves," Aino added. "At 2100 attack points each, he'll only be able to get rid of one of them."

"That's what you think," Shougo replied, and opened the field spell slot on his duel disk. "I play the field spell… 'Dark Zone'!"

The sky above them turned purple, and cloud-like smoke began to gather in the air. Shougo smiled triumphantly as energy rumbled in the air, small bolts of lightning shooting back and forth between the pooling smoke forms.

"Because of the power of the Dark Zone, all of my Dark-attribute monsters gain 500 attack points," Shougo explained. "That gives my Blood Vorse enough points to meet your Beast Wolf head to head."

***Blood Vorse*** *— +500 ATK (2400 ATK)*
***Dark Armed Dragon*** *— +500 ATK (3300 ATK)*

"Blood Vorse! Attack Toragami's wolf!"

The fiend and the beast clashed on the field, and one explosion later the wolf was gone and Toragami's life points were lowered by 300 points — the only damage she'd taken thus far.

***Toragami** — 4000 LP — 300 — 3700 LP*

*Awesome, Shougo-kun!* Chiba thought to himself. *Blood Vorse is able to challenge Beast Wolf now thanks to that field spell. Now, let's see if Toragami-sama has a trap waiting for you with that facedown…*

Shougo thrust his fist out. "Now, Dark Armed Dragon. Destroy that other Beast Wolf."

The dragon reared its arm backward and prepared to strike a massive blow.

"Dark… Armed Punisher!"

Its punch split the Beast Wolf into two and sent waves of dark energy across the field against Toragami's body. She just stood as wind blew through her hair and her life points lowered by 1200 points — they were now at 2500.

***Toragami** — 3700 LP — 1200 — 2500 LP*

"I'll set one card face down, and that's that. Are you ready to give me the respect I deserve yet,

Toragami? You have to admit I'm doing well so far."

But Toragami just stared at her opponent intently as she put her hand on her deck.

"This fool's game ends now."

She drew a card. "I have sacrificed Jean, Raikou, Leila, Luminous, Garoth and Beast Wolf."

"It's over," Katsuki said.

"What do you mean?" Chiba asked.

"Just watch," was Aino's response.

Toragami took a card from her hand and showed it to Shougo. "By the dying sparks of their sacrifice, I can now summon… Judgment Dragoon."

She then slapped the card onto her duel disk and the ground beneath the duelists shook. A crack opened in the earth, and out of it shone a beam of light. It split the air, then returned down to land, taking the form of an immense, winged and feathered dragon, seeming to appear to directly confront Shougo's Dark Armed Dragon.

***Judgment Dragoon*** *— LV8 Light Dragon (3000 ATK)*

But Shougo remained unimpressed. “Big deal,” he scoffed. “It only has 3000 attack points. Even if my Swords weren’t on the field holding you back, my Dark Armed Dragon has 3300! You can’t touch me!”

“You amateur!” Aino shouted. “You’re too much of an idiot to know that you’ve lost!”

“By paying 1000 life points,” Toragami went on. “I can destroy every card on the field except my Dragoon.”

***Toragami*** *— 2500 LP — 1000 — 1500 LP*

“No!” Shougo shouted, his eyes widened in desperation. ‘No! I can’t lose!’

“Purify the field, Judgment Dragoon!” Toragami shouted. “Erase everything with the light of truth!”

Wind began to blaze through the arena as Toragami’s dragon began to glow.

“Reverse card open!” Shougo shouted. “‘Phantom of Darkness’! I can negate a card effect that targets a Dark attribute monster!”

But Toragami shook her head. “You weakling. Judgment Dragoon’s power is far beyond a junk card like that.”

“Judgment Dragoon’s ability doesn’t target,” Chiba yelled over the growing sound of the wind. “Cards like that won’t be effective!”

Light emerged from all around Judgment Dragoon. Everyone except Toragami had to shield their eyes. When the light faded, the Dark Armed Dragon, Blood Vorse and Toragami’s other facedown were still on the field, but blanched white, and the purple clouds of the Dark Zone were faded.

Shougo’s monsters shattered into pieces and the field spell’s magic fell away. Finally, Toragami’s facedown was revealed before it was destroyed.

Shougo was in utter shock when he saw what it was.

“‘Darkness Absorbing Magic Mirror’…?” He fell onto his knees. *With that card, she could have sealed my Dark Armed Dragon’s effect last turn.* Tears then entered his eyes as he realized the truth. *She was toying with me… the entire time!*

Toragami raised her hand into the air and then dropped it, pointing at her opponent. “Aoyama Shougo! You are not worthy to receive the attack of my Dragoon! You are not even worth the cards you hold!”

“Don’t talk like that,” Chiba said, coming to Shougo’s defense! “He still has 3650 life points, and your Dragoon only has 3000! Buck up, Shougo-kun. You can still win!”

Katsuki touched her hand to her head and chuckled.

Chiba’s eye twitched. “What? It’s true!”

“You dropout boys and your heart of the cards,” Aino laughed. “Toragami-sama’s won.”

Toragami withdrew another card from her hand. “Judgment Dragoon, your job is done! I sacrifice you now to summon from my hand, Lightlord Dragon Gragonith!”

Another dragon, this one looking more royal and majestic compared to the previous dragon’s mystical presence, appeared.

***Lightlord Dragon Gragonith*** *— LV6 Light Dragon (2000 ATK)*

Shougo got back up, feeling humiliated but not quite ready to admit defeat. He tried to clandestinely wipe his tears and glared at his opponent. “Are you still going to mock me? That dragon has even less attack points th…”

“Don’t speak back to your better, you piece of trash!” Toragami interrupted him.

The boy was startled as her words cut him to the core.

“My cemetery contains the sleeping souls of true soldiers who gave their all in this battle, and for their trouble, they were thoroughly disrespected by you,” Toragami said. “Receive their anger! For each Lightlord in my graveyard, Gragonith gains 300 attack points.” She then dumped the contents of her cemetery into her hand; almost her entire deck.

“So that’s the strategy behind the Lightlord deck,” Chiba mused. “Awesome. As expected from the one called the Blitzkrieg Queen.”

“I have six different Lightlords,” Toragami went on, showing each one to Shougo as she placed them in the cemetery one by one. When she was done, Gragonith had powered up to 3800.

***Lightlord Dragon Gragonith*** *— +1800 ATK (3800 ATK)*

“Your hand is empty… nothing can save you. Gragonith! Let us finish this meaningless charade. Direct attack!”

The dragon reared up and shot a beam of light from its mouth, striking Shougo full on in the chest. He shouted with pain as he fell down, his life point counter hitting zero and his deck falling out of his duel disk.

***Shougo*** *— 3650 LP — 0 LP*

“Shougo-kun!” Chiba shouted, starting to run to help his friend, but he was held back by Aino’s arm.

“It’s his loss,” she said. “Let him deal with it.”

Shougo collapsed on the boardwalk as the lighthouse’s beacon shone on him.

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Asuka Tenjouin stared at the ceiling as she lay in bed. She had said she would sleep, but she was nervous about the prospect of a duel with her boss.

“Kiyotaki Naoyuki…” she repeated the name to herself.

She knew very little about his dueling style. She knew he had studied economics before becoming a Duel Monsters expert, becoming one of the youngest graduates of the Eastern Academy. In time, he became a well-known teacher of the art, which

landed him an envied job as Chancellor Samejima's successor two years ago.

Through it all, he had maintained an aura of mystery. Much like this new boy Shougo.

She got up and looked through her card set. *I used the Cyber Girls for the first time in years*, she thought. *I might need something a bit more serious against the Chancellor. But on the other hand, he's probably expecting that.*

Tenjouin looked through a set of cards she hadn't touched in quite some time.

*Why do I feel like I need these cards right now?* she pondered.

A small explosion was heard in the distance; not loud enough to wake anyone up at this time of night. Tenjouin recognized the sound as generated by a Solid Vision system. *Who could be dueling now?*

She looked out the window and saw the lighthouse, remembered her early days at the school; many nights spent at the lighthouse. She considered going out to find out what was going on, but decided against it. *My business now is getting my deck together, so I can get some sleep. Otherwise, I'll be up all night.*

Tenjouin got to work.

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Toragami turned away and lowered her disk. “Katsuki! Aino! It’s time to go.” The two ran to her side as she began to walk away.

Shougo struggled to get up. “If only… I had had… Kuriboh… I could have…”

“Shut up!” Toragami shouted, stopping but not turning back. “You keep making excuses and justifying your loss. But your deck saw you for the coward you are! You will never be a duelist. Losers should stay silent on the ground until the winner is gone!”

Shougo tried not to lose all of his composure. “How can… you… talk that way…”

“The whimperings of a beaten dog are meaningless to me.” She then left without saying another word.

Chiba ran to help his friend up.

“Get yourself together, Shougo-kun!” he urged him.

“No… it’s alright, Chiba-kun,” Shougo sighed. “She’s right. I’ll never be a duelist. I…”

“Don’t listen to her!” Chiba shouted. “I don’t care who she is. Nobody can talk to you like that. You gave it your all, didn’t you? Don’t pay attention to her words!”

“But… don’t you see, Chiba-kun? I gave it my all, and I still lost.” He gave a broken smile. “I was right from the beginning. I never should have started dueling… I… I just can’t stand losing.”

Chiba sighed, not sure how to respond. “Let’s just go back to our room,” he said.

He helped his friend up and they started back.

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Later that night, Shougo got up out of his bed, unable to sleep.

After his ignominious defeat, he had felt broken and his mind was restless and chaotic. He kept thinking about leaving the island, although he couldn’t figure out how. *I don’t belong here,* he kept repeating to himself. *I just can’t do it. I can’t.*

He quietly left the room and went outside. He stood on the deck of the Osiris Red dorms, staring at the ocean.

“You could run away,” a voice said. “That would be the prudent thing to do.”

A sudden chill went down Shougo’s spine. “W… who’s there?”

“Or you could take hold of your destiny with your own hands,” it went on. “It’s your choice.”

A shadowed figure stood just out of sight in the woods beyond the dorms.

“So, how about it then, Aoyama Shougo?” he asked. “Will you fight me and find out the truth?”

Normally, the side of Shougo that loved the challenge and the fight would rush in and accept. But this time, that voice was saying a very different thing. To get far away from this person, and as soon as possible.

“N-no. I don’t accept. Get away!” Shougo backed up towards his room.

“If that is what you wish. But I will be back. After all, you were the one who called me here.”

And then, as the sun began to rise, the man was gone.

Shougo was shaking in his skin. More than usual, he was scared — and he didn't understand why. That person gave him a terrible feeling…

"Shougo-kuun!" Chiba's voice shouted. "I heard you shouting. Are you okay?"

"Chiba-kun… I…" Shougo tried to get himself together. "I thought I heard someone out here, but it was nothing."

"Have you slept? Classes start in a couple of hours."

"I'm fine… thank you."

Chiba nodded and adjusted his glasses. "Come on, we need to get ready."

Shougo stared for a moment at the rising sun and then mulled over the events of last night. Even as humiliating a loss as that was, there was nothing he could do but move forward.

He slowly headed back to his room.

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster Card, "Judgment Dragoon"***
Level 8, 3000 attack points, 2600 defense points. This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except when there are 4 or more unique "Lightlord" Monsters in your cemetery. By paying 1000 Life Points, destroy all cards on the field except this one. During your End Phase, you must send four cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

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**Shougo:** "I don't want to do it today."
**Chiba:** "But you have to! You're the star of the show!"
**Katsuki:** "You dummy! Shougo isn't even in the next episode."
**Aino:** "The day's come where Tenjouin-sensei intends to find the truth about Shougo. But instead she finds a challenge from the school chancellor. In a moment, she finds the summoning of her Cyber Girl cards sealed and considers actually using the dark cards from her past."
**Katsuki:** "Tenjouin-sensei can do it! She's the great professor and primadonna of Obelisk Blue after all!"
**Aino:** "Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero:**

***'Tenjouin vs. Kiyotaki: An Unplayable Card'***."
**Shougo:** "I'm not in the next episode?! No way…"

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**GIANT VIRUS (Giant Germ)**
*Effect Monster (L2 Dark Demon, 1000/100)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent. You may also Special Summon up to 2 "Giant Virus" Cards from your Deck in Attack Position.

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

**KILLER TOMATO (Mystic Tomato)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Plant, 1400/1100)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, you may Special Summon 1

Dark-attribute monster with 1500 ATK or less from your Deck in Attack Position.

**DRAIN SHIELD (Draining Shield)**
*Normal Trap*
Negate the attack of 1 of your opponent's monsters and gain Life Points equal to its ATK.

**BLOOD VORSE (Vorse Raider)**
*Normal Monster (L4 Dark Beast-Warrior, 1900/1200)*
This wicked Beast-Warrior does every horrid thing imaginable and loves it! His axe bears the marks of his countless victims.

**SEALING SWORDS OF LIGHT (Swords of Revealing Light)**
*Normal Magic*
Flip all face-down monsters your opponent controls face-up. This card remains on the field for 3 of your opponent's turns. While this card is face-up on the field, none of your opponent's monsters may declare an attack.

**MONSTER REINCARNATION**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 card from your hand, and return a Monster card in your cemetery to your hand.

**METEOR DRAGON**
*Normal Monster (L5 Fire Dragon, 1800/2000)*
This dragon appeared from the sky and crashed to the earth.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON (Red-Eyes B. Dragon)**
*Normal Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
A ferocious dragon with a deadly attack.

**DARK ZONE (Mystic Plasma Zone)**
*Field Magic*
Raise the ATK of all Dark-attribute monsters by 500 points, and lower their DEF by 400 points.

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CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI:

**LIGHTNING VORTEX**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 card from your hand. Destroy all face-up monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE (Mirror Force)**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an

attack. Destroy all Attack Position monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**LIGHTLORD SUMMONER LUMINOUS (Lumina, Lightsworn Summoner)**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Light Spellcaster, 1000/1000)*
Once per turn, you can discard 1 card from your hand to Special Summon a Level 4 or lower "Lightlord" Monster from your cemetery. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**HOLY LIFE BARRIER (Hallowed Life Barrier)**
*Normal Trap*
Discard 1 card from your hand. This turn, any damage you takke from your opponent's cards and effects becomes 0.

**LIGHTLORD WARRIOR GAROTH (Garoth, Lightsworn Warrior)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1850/1300)*
If cards are sent from the deck to the cemetery by the effect of a "Lightlord" monster you control other than 'Lightlord Warrior Garos', you may send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery, and for each "Lightlord" Monster discarded by this effect, draw 1 card.

**LIGHTLORD BEAST WOLF (Wulf, Lightsworn Beast)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Beast-Warrior, 2100/300)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. When this card is sent from your Deck to your cemetery, Special Summon this card.

**COMMAND SILENCER**
*Instant Magic*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Negate that attack, and draw 1 card.

**LIGHTLORD HUNTER RAIKOU (Ryko, Lightsworn Hunter)**
*Effect Monster (LV2 Light Beast, 200/100)*
When this face-down card is flipped face-up, by sending the top 3 cards from your deck to the cemetery you can destroy 1 card on the field.

**LIGHTLORD PALADIN JEAN (Jain, Lightsworn Paladin)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1800/1200)*
When this card attacks a monster, it gains 300 ATK during the Damage Step. During your End Phase, send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**JUSTICE WORLD (Realm of Light)**
*Field Magic*

When cards are sent from your deck to the cemetery, place 1 Shine Counter on this card. For each Shine Counter on this card, increase the ATK of all "Lightlord" monsters on the field by 100 points. If this face-up card with at least 2 Shine Counters would be destroyed by a card effect, remove 2 Shine Counters to negate its destruction.

**LIGHTLORD MAGICIAN LEILA (Lyla, Lightsworn Magician)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1700/200)*
When this card is switched from Attack Position to face-up Defense Position, destroy 1 Magic or Trap Card your opponent controls. When this effect is activated, you cannot change its Battle Position until the end of your next turn. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**JUDGMENT DRAGOON (Judgment Dragon)**
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Dragon, 3000/2600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except when there are 4 or more unique "Lightlord" Monsters in your cemetery. By paying 1000 Life Points, destroy all cards on the field except this one. During your End Phase, send 4 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD DRAGON GRAGONITH (Gragonith, Lightsworn Dragon)**
*Effect Monster (LV6 Light Dragon, 2000/1600)*
This card gains 300 ATK for each unique "Lightlord" Monster in your cemetery. When the ATK of this monster is higher than the DEF of a Defense-position monster it destroys, inflict the difference as Battle Damage to your opponent. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**DARKNESS ABSORBING MAGIC MIRROR (Shadow-Imprisoning Mirror)**
*Continuous Trap*
Negate the effect of a Dark-attribute Monster that activates on the field or in the cemetery.

# 5. Tenjouin vs Kiyotaki

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (). Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Five: "Tenjouin vs. Kiyotaki: An Unplayable Card"***

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It was the early morning; the sun was just coming up and students were getting ready for a day of learning.

However, two people were up and about at this hour — the Chancellor of Duel Academia, Naoyuki Kiyotaki, and the head professor of the school, Asuka Tenjouin.

They were meeting in his roomy office that oversaw the island.

“Kiyotaki-kouchou,” Tenjouin said. “It’s an honor to meet you in person.”

“The honor is mine, Tenjouin-san,” the Chancellor replied. “I’ve wanted to do this for some time. Here is my request — the deal, per se. You and I will duel, right here, right now. If you win, I’ll tell you everything about Aoyama-kun that you want to know.”

“And if I lose?” Tenjouin asked, placing her duel disk on.

“The status quo is maintained. Simple as that.” He activated his disk and smiled. “After all, having a match with you is reward enough for me.”

Tenjouin loaded her deck into her device. “Why the need to be so secretive?”

“Defeat me and find out. Let’s begin!”

*I feel like less of an adult for going through with this*, Tenjouin thought to herself. *But I must admit… I do want to duel him.*

They both raised their arms in preparation.

“Duel!” they both shouted.

“I’ll begin the match, Kiyotaki-kouchou,” Tenjouin announced. “My turn. Draw!”

She then looked at her hand and her eyes widened involuntarily. ‘That card… why did I get it now?’

Tenjouin regained her composure quickly, and resumed her turn. “I summon Cyber Gymnatics in defense mode,” she announced. A muscular, ponytailed woman wearing a mask appeared on the field, crouching and raising her arms up to guard.

***Cyber Gymnatics*** *— LV4 Earth Warrior (1800 DEF)*

“I set two cards face down. Turn end.”

The Chancellor smiled. “Good strong opening,” he remarked. “I’ll make my move now, though. I summon Red Gadget in defense mode.”

***Red Gadget*** *— LV4 Earth Machine (1500 DEF)*

*Gadget monsters?* Tenjouin thought to herself. *I never would have guessed the Chancellor of this school uses Gadgets.*

"Red Gadget's monster effect activates," he went on. "I can take a Yellow Gadget from my deck and add it to my hand. Next I will activate the continuous magic card… 'Phillips Curve'."

A card whose image contained an economics chart appeared on the field.

"Phillips Curve?" Tenjouin mused aloud. She'd never heard of that card before.

"The Phillips curve conveys the relation between unemployment and inflation," Kiyotaki explained. "The card itself sends that idea out by raising the levels of all cards in our hands by two levels. In other words… you'll have to sacrifice to summon levels 3s and 4s."

"What?!" Tenjouin's eyes widened again.

"Of course, that's not quite fair, is it? The card's effect is cancelled if you have no monsters so… it shouldn't cripple you too much. In any case… I'll set one card and end my turn. Your move, Tenjouin-san."

Tenjouin sighed and pulled a card from her hand. *Blade Skater. I would have to lose Cyber Gymnatics to summon this. If I could just summon Cyber Prima and destroy that magic card… but I need two sacrifices now to get that out. It's a level eight while Phillips Curve is active.*

*This is troublesome… if only I could use that… no! I can't even think of using that card!*

"Turn end," she announced.

"Sorry to put you through so much," Kiyotaki said as he pulled a card. "But you have to admit, it's fun to play this game again, isn't it?"

Tenjouin didn't feel as though being restricted from summoning her monsters was very fun, but it was interesting to be one of the few to be an opponent of the Chancellor.

"Now I sacrifice my Red Gadget to summon Yellow Gadget in defense mode," the Chancellor announced, as the gear disappeared to be replaced with a similar-looking one.

***Yellow Gadget*** *— LV4 Earth Machine (1200 DEF)*

Tenjouin guarded herself, expecting a tricky strategy. ‘He sacrificed his Red Gadget for a weaker one? What could he be thinking?’

“And because of Yellow Gadget’s effect, I place a Green Gadget in my hand.” The Chancellor pulled the card out of his deck. “Turn end.”

*Whatever he’s thinking, I’m going to defeat him before he can play it out.* “My turn… draw! And now I’ll tribute Cyber Gymnatics for Blade Skater.”

***Blade Skater** — LV4 Earth Warrior (1400 ATK)*

“Go, Blade Skater! Destroy Yellow Gadget with Accel Slicer!”

Kiyotaki’s eyes widened. “How rash, Tenjouin-san. I think you might not be thinking before you’re acting.”

Tenjouin just ordered the attack on the Chancellor’s Monster. Moving very gracefully, Blade Skater rushed past the gadget and slashed it to pieces with her arm blades.

“Turn end,” Tenjouin said simply. She stared at her hand; the presence of the card was already agitating her. *Why did I choose to put these cards in*

*my deck? What was that feeling that compelled me to do so…?* she asked herself.

"You should really ponder on the movitations of your actions, Tenjouin-san. Such motives are the basis of all social groups. My turn. Draw! And I'll summon the Antique Gear Knight in attack mode."

An old robotic soldier with a long jousting sword and a shield made of a gear rose on the field, looking very similar to the Antique Gears that Tenjouin's old teacher, Cronos de Medici, used.

***Antique Gear Knight*** *— LV4 Earth Machine (1800 ATK)*

"Antique Gears?" Tenjouin gasped in surprise.

"Since I control no monsters, Phillips Curve doesn't affect me. And yes, it's an Antique Gear. Surely you didn't think your Cronos-sensei was the only man to have such cards? Of course, I'm not nearly as one-dimensional as he was with the deck. I realize their true potential. And I'll demonstrate it right now.

"From my hand, I activate 'Force Release', which activates my Antique Gear Knight's Second Summon effect."

The card shimmered on the field and seemed to give the robot power.

“I’ve heard about these cards,” Tenjouin mused aloud. “The ‘Dual’ cards… cards that are Normal Monsters on the field, but can be summoned again the next turn to activate their hidden powers. It seems you’ve found a way to get around that restriction.”

“Not without a cost, of course, as with all things,” Kiyotaki said, smiling. “My economy deck is focused on such things… in the case of Force Release, my Antique Gear Knight will be flipped face down at the end of my turn, requiring me to flip summon it as a normal monster in my next turn. But in the meantime… my Antique Gear Knight will attack your Blade Skater!”

The robot monster rushed Tenjouin’s ice skating figure.

“And in case you were going to activate that ‘Deux Passe’ card which has become your signature, Antique Gear Knight’s effect is… no Magic or Trap Cards can be activated when he battles! My Knight, crush her Skater now!”

Tenjouin raised her arm protectively as she lost 400 life points.

***Tenjouin** — 4000 LP — 400 — 3600 LP*

“And now, I’ll cause you to understand the true pain of a civilized society,” Kiyotaki went on, fully involved in his own duel now. “I activate the continuous spell ‘Beveridge Curve’. While this card is on the field, both players have to halve their life points to Special Summon any monster!”

“What?!” Tenjouin shouted in disbelief.

“And now my turn is coming to an end, so my Antique Gear Knight is flipped face down.” The robot was replaced by the image of a sideways card.

Tenjouin grunted and drew a card. *At least, now that I don’t have a monster, I won’t be affected by that Philips Curve card. But the other one…*

She looked at the card she drew and her eyes widened. Another card from the set she had shuffled into her deck for some reason. And this time, she really had no choice but to use it.

*My facedowns won’t help… but this will…*

“I activate the spell card ‘Icicle Sacrifice’,” Tenjouin announced. ‘I must designate one of my

Monster Card Zones and seal it from use during this duel.' She clicked a button on the far right slot, and it was turned off. "Then I Special Summon an Icicle Token to my field."

A large pillar of ice appeared in front of Tenjouin.

***Icicle Token** — LV1 Water Aqua (500 DEF)*

"I activate Beveridge Curve's effect, and I'll have you halve your Life Points, Tenjouin-san," the Chancellor said.

"I know," Tenjouin said, and grunted as her points went down to 1800.

***Tenjouin** — 3600 LP / 2 — 1800 LP*

"But I can use this icicle as two sacrifices for a Tribute Summon. And because of your Phillips Curve, I'll have to. Icicle Sacrifice… I tribute you to summon Cyber Prima!"

The Chancellor nodded. "Good move," he complimented her.

***Cyber Prima** — LV6 Light Warrior (2300 ATK)*

As the Cyber Girl shimmered on the field, her effect caused the arena to tremble. The Phillips and Beveridge Curve cards were shattered.

“Don’t think you’re safe from damage, either,” Tenjouin announced. “Reverse card open… Meteor Rain! During this turn, when my monsters attack your defense mode monsters, the difference between its defense points and my attack points is dealt to you as damage. That Antique Gear Knight has only 500 defense. Cyber Prima… attack with The Ending’s Reverence!”

Tenjouin’s monster spun and shot out sparks of energy at the hidden monster, which revealed itself from under the card and was shattered.

Kiyotaki held his arm up and then his facedown card rose on the field. “Reverse card open,” he announced. “‘Diminishing Returns’!”

“Diminishing Returns…?” Another card Tenjouin had never heard of.

“It’s a continuous trap card that I can activate now,” Kiyotaki explained. “Each time either of our cards inflicts battle damage, a return counter is placed on it, representing the success of the attack. However, the battle damage the opponent receives will be halved every time!”

“Which means…”

“Only 900 points of damage will be inflicted on me,” the Chancellor said as a spark of energy hovered over Prima. “And the next time your monster attacks, the damage will be even lower. You see, the law of diminishing returns dictates that the longer one person works, the less inclined he will be to work as hard.”

***Kiyotaki** — 4000 LP — 900 — 3100 LP*

“This is just a stall tactic,” Tenjouin grumbled as her monster returned to her. She was immediately surprised at her own gall, talking back to her superior in this way. *These cards.…*

“Perhaps,” he replied. “Will you finish your turn?”

“Yes,” Tenjouin sighed, folding her cards in front of her in order to hide that card from her sight.

“Then I’ll draw. And I play the magic card ‘Pot of Greed’, which allows me to draw two cards. Next, I’ll play ‘Antique Gear Garage’.”

The Antique Gear Knight card slipped out of the Chancellor’s duel disk slot, and he placed it in his hand.

“Next, I will activate the card ‘Feather of the Phoenix God’ from my hand,” he went on. ‘I discard one card from my hand, and then I place any card in my cemetery to the top of my deck.’ He then placed his Green Gadget card into the cemetery slot, which was then promptly ejected. “Even the one I just placed there!”

*He’s planning something,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *But with all the cards he uses that I’ve never seen before, I have no way of knowing exactly what it is.*

“‘Arms Hole’, activate!” Kiyotaki shouted. “I draw one card from the top of my deck and place it directly in my cemetery. Then I can take an equip card from my deck and put it in my hand.”

*So it’s something to do with those Gadgets,* Tenjouin’s line of reasoning went on. *He placed Green Gadget on top of his deck knowing he’d discard it with Arms Hole. Perhaps he’s going to use ‘Premature Burial’ to revive a card.*

“You must be thinking that I’d use ‘Premature Burial’ to revive one of my Gadgets,” the Chancellor said, smiling. “But why do that when I can play something stronger? I activate from my deck… the equip spell ‘Gear Gadget Dynamo’!”

As he placed the card in his duel disk, the image of a factory appeared in the room, engines churning and smoke emitting from the pipes.

“Another card I’ve never heard of,” Tenjouin said. “What does it do?”

“Firstly, I cannot activate this card unless the only monsters in my cemetery are one copy each of the Gadget cards. Once that happens, by paying 1000 life points, I can take an ‘Antique Gear Gadjildragon’ card from my deck, and summon it to the field!”

***Kiyotaki*** *— 3100 LP — 1000 — 2100 LP*

“What?! So that’s why you used ‘Phillips Curve’… to get the Gadget cards in your cemetery to use this card.”

The factory rumbled, its doors opened, and a new creature flew through its doors — a mechanical dragon made entirely of material from the Antique Gear monsters, plus some gadgets and gears all around that held it together. It emitted a clunky roar as it appeared on the field.

***Antique Gear Gadjildragon*** *— LV8 Earth Machine (3000 ATK)*

“That’s right,” Kiyotaki said. “My colleague, Professor de Medici, was focused on the Antique Gear Golem. But this monster is just as strong and more efficient as well! And now, Tenjouin-san… it has chosen you for its opponent!”

“3000 attack points,” Tenjouin gasped.

“What’s more, it has the Antique Gear effect. You won’t be able to activate any magic or trap cards when I attack with this card. Now… attack Cyber Prima with Industrial Spirit!”

The dragon reared back and shot a spark at Tenjouin’s monster. It defended itself but was destroyed.

“That’s not all,” the Chancellor said. “Because of Gear Gadget Dynamo, I must remove a Gadget in my cemetery from play when I attack. In exchange, I gain the effect I would have gained had I sacrificed that monster.”

Yellow Gadget’s card appeared from the cemetery slot and Kiyotaki placed it in his pocket.

“Yellow Gadget’s effect… you lose 600 life points when my Gadjildragon destroys your monster!”

Tenjouin grit her teeth as her life went down to 1200.

***Tenjouin** — 1800 LP — 600 — 1200 LP*

“Now, Diminishing Returns’ effect activates, halving the battle damage you’d have taken. So that 700 points of damage you’d have taken goes down to 350.”

***Tenjouin** — 1200 LP — 350 — 850 LP*

Tenjouin stared her opponent down. *Gear Gadget Dynamo… I knew that more money equaled access to more powerful cards, but I never imagined that people in the high levels of the Duel Monsters world would actually be able to play cards that the general public didn’t know about. I might have to use that card…*

Faint memories she could not recollect now haunted her mind.

*No… I won’t stoop to that level just to win. Even for my student… I can’t lose myself. I would be a failure as a teacher if I sacrificed my ideals and sank so low for victory.*

“My turn’s over,” Kiyotaki said. “Your move.”

*Antique Gear Gadjildragon…* Tenjouin pondered as she drew. *That card of his introduces a whole new way to play Gadgets. So why haven't I seen anyone use it before?*

She looked at the card she drew. Cyber Angel Dakini.

"Great," she said. "I summon Cyber Petit Angel in attack mode."

A pink circle with a face, wings and a halo appeared on the field.

***Cyber Petit Angel** — LV2 Light Angel (300 ATK)*

"Cyber Petit Angel's effect activates," Tenjouin went on. "I place a Machine Angel Ritual from my deck into my hand. And now, I'll flip my facedown card… Call of the Living Dead. Revive, Cyber Prima!"

Her ballerina monster reappeared on the field.

***Cyber Prima** (2300 ATK)*

"And now… I will sacrifice them both at the holy altar of my Machine Goddess! Prima! Petit Angel! Lend me your power! Revive the holy machine goddess… Cyber Angel Dakini!"

The two monsters shimmered away and were replaced by a blue-skinned, six armed warrior holding various weapons. She shouted and entered into a battle stance.

***Cyber Angel Dakini*** *— LV8 Light Angel (2700 ATK)*

“Cyber Angel Dakini’s special effect activates!” Tenjouin shouted. “You must choose a monster on your side of the field and destroy it. Of course, Kiyotaki-kouchou, you have only one.”

“Yes, and it won’t be going anywhere,” Kiyotaki said with a slight smirk. “Gear Gadget Dynamo’s effect, activate. By removing a Gadget monster in my cemetery from play, I can negate an effect that would destroy my Gadjildragon. I remove Green Gadget!”

Another effect she didn’t know about. *Damn! Dakini isn’t strong enough to battle his dragon.*

“Turn end.”

“My turn,” the Chancellor said. “Draw! Another effect about my Gear Gadget Dynamo you should know about, Tenjouin-san. If I run out of Gadget monsters in my graveyard, I’ll have to destroy my Dragon.”

“Good to know,” Tenjouin said.

“Which is why a card like this comes in handy. I activate ‘Foolish Burial’ from my hand. From my deck, I’ll send Yellow Gadget to the grave. Now, Gadjildragon… destroy Cyber Angel Dakini! Industrial Spirit!”

A quick mechanized attack later, Tenjouin’s strongest monster was gone. Fortunately, since the dragon had a counter on it, the damage was severely reduced, and Tenjouin’s life points went down to 775.

***Tenjouin** — 850 LP — 75 — 775 LP*

“You’re not out of the woods yet,” the Chancellor said. “I’ll remove the Yellow Gadget I just sent to the grave for Gadjildragon’s effect and have you take 600 points of damage.”

Tenjouin winced as she went down further to 175.

***Tenjouin** — 775 LP — 600 — 175 LP*

“Turn end.”

Tenjouin sighed. *This is it. The draw that will make or break me.*

“My turn… draw. And I activate ‘Pot of Greed’.” She then drew two cards and looked at them.

Her eyes widened and then misted over. *No.*

She placed her hand on her deck. “I surrender. You win, Kiyotaki-kouchou.”

The Chancellor blinked in utter surprise. “You… surrender? Tenjouin Asuka surrenders?”

“I can’t win with the cards I have. You’re the winner.”

“I don’t believe it. Let me see your hand.”

Tenjouin considered the results of disobeying her superior and frowned. She held up her hand to show the cards in her hand — the Blue Ice White Nights Dragon and Raise Dead she had drawn from Pot of Greed, a Fusion Recovery card, and the White Veil she had held in her hand from the beginning.

“‘White Veil’? Tenjouin-san… you had this card?”

“A long time ago… it… when I was setting up my deck, I had the strange urge to put this card in my deck. But… I refuse to use it. It…”

“Tenjouin-san,” Kiyotaki said, and his demeanor became strangely stern in comparison to his attitude while they had been dueling. “The time may come when you must use this card. It might be sooner than you think.”

“You don’t understand,” Tenjouin sighed. “During our duel… well, it’s hard to explain, but… having this card brought me to an edge that I almost fell over once. And I don’t want to do it again.”

Kiyotaki sighed and sat down in his chair, putting his hands to his face. He looked out the window for a few moments, then turned back to Tenjouin and smiled. “You and I are a lot alike,” he said. “Both professionally and personally… we both are among the youngest people to succeed in our professions. And we both enjoy dueling tremendously. I know I enjoyed my duel with you.”

“There are things more important to me than having fun,” Tenjouin replied, taking a seat. “When I decided to become a teacher, I put the welfare of my students above my desire to have fun in a duel. I was hoping that perhaps you felt the same.”

“Enjoying yourself is very important,” the Chancellor replied. “The time might come in the future where the duels will become serious and there

will not be fun to be had. As I said… the time may come when you will have to win at all costs."

Tenjouin raised an eyebrow. "Are you trying to tell me something about Aoyama Shougo?"

"The way I see it, you have a choice ahead of you. I will tell you this — the Aoyama boy has huge untapped potential, but he's also an extremely sensitive young man. Can you stop every student from teasing him? Or can you allow him to rise to the challenge ahead of him?"

"I don't understand what you are asking me to do. Do you have to be this coy?"

"The truth is, Tenjouin-san… I know about as much about Aoyama as you. But he feels familiar to me. I know that there is something about this island that attracts powerful spirits. And there might be another incident in its future."

"How do you know this, Kiyotaki-kouchou?"

Kiyotaki looked down, and then smiled a mysterious smile. "Just a sense," he replied. "I've learned to trust my feelings. And speaking of which, I feel that you'll be late for your class if you don't hurry."

“Oh, I’ve lost track of time,” Tenjouin gasped, surprised with herself. “I’m sorry, Chancellor, I have to go…”

“Feel free.”

Tenjouin gathered her things and put her duel disk away, and walked briskly away.

“Have a good day, Tenjouin-san,” Kiyotaki called after her as she left. He then turned back towards the window, observing the island.

*We may have very few days that can be called ‘good days’ left,’* he mused…

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Equip Magic Card, “Gear Gadget Dynamo”***
When you have only Red, Yellow and Green Gadgets in your cemetery, you can activate this card and bring out an Antique Gear Gadjildragon from your deck! When you attack, remove a Gadget in the cemetery from play for your Dragon to gain its effects, and if your Dragon would be destroyed, you can do the same to protect it. When you run out of Gadgets, you will lose the Gadjildragon.

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**Shougo:** “I’ll be in the next episode for sure.”
**Chiba:** “That’s right, Shougo-kun. In the next episode, he reveals the story of how he met the Three Legendary Duelists.”
**Shougo:** “I’ll also tell the story of how I got that card…”
**Chiba:** “The Dark Armed Dragon?”
**Shougo:** “No… the Red-Eyes Black Dragon that Yugi-san used on my behalf against Kaiba-san.”
**Chiba:** “And the super-cool legend of Aoyama Shougo begins like this!”
**Shougo:** “W… what? Don’t say unnecessary things, Chiba-kun!”
**Chiba:** “Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *‘A Legend and a Dragon: Shougo’s Memory’***.”
**Shougo:** “‘The blue dragon brings victory, but the red dragon brings possibility’…”

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION:**

CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:

**CYBER GYMNATICS (Cyber Gymnast)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 800/1800)*
Once per turn, you can discard 1 card from your hand to destroy 1 face-up Attack Position monster your opponent controls.

**BLADE SKATER**

*Normal Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1400/1500)*

An image of beauty on the ice, this gorgeous warrior rips her opponents to pieces with her stylish Accel Slicer attack.

**ICICLE SACRIFICE**

*Normal Magic*

Designate 1 of your empty Monster Card Zones and seal it from play during the Duel. Special Summon 1 Icicle Token (L1 Water Aqua, 0/500). If you Sacrifice this token for a Tribute Summon, treat it as 2 Sacrifices.

**CYBER PRIMA**

*Effect Monster (L6 Light Warrior, 2300/1600)*

When this card is Tribute Summoned, destroy all face-up Magic cards on the field.

**METEOR RAIN (Meteorain)**

*Normal Trap*

Your monsters inflict piercing damage for the turn this card is activated.

**CYBER ANGEL DAKINI**

*Effect Monster (L8 Light Angel, 2700/2400)*

This card can only be Ritual Summoned with the Ritual Magic Card “Machine Angel Ritual”. When this card is Special Summoned, the opponent selects

1 Monster on their side of the field and destroys it. This monster inflicts piercing damage.

**CYBER PETIT ANGEL**

*Effect Monster (L2 Light Angel, 300/200)*

When this card is Summoned you can select 1 "Machine Angel Ritual" from your Deck and add it to your hand.

**CALL OF THE LIVING DEAD (Call of the Hanted)**

*Continuous Trap*

Select 1 Monster in your cemetery and Special Summon it in Attack Position. If the selected Monster is destroyed, destroy this card. If this card is removed from the field, destroy the monster.

**MACHINE ANGEL RITUAL**

*Ritual Magic*

This card is used to Ritual Summon a "Cyber Angel" Monster. You must offer monsters whose total Level equal or exceed the Level of the Ritual Monster.

**POT OF GREED**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**RAISE DEAD**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 monster from either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

**BLUE ICE WHITE NIGHTS DRAGON (White Night Dragon)**

*Effect Monster (L8 Water Dragon, 3000/2500)*

You can negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card that targets this card and destroy it. When a face-up Monster you control is selected as an attack target, by sending one face-up Magic or Trap card you control to the cemetery, change the attack target to this card.

**FUSION RECOVERY**

*Normal Magic*

Return 1 "Fusion" Magic card and 1 Fusion Material Monster used in a Fusion Summon from the cemetery to your hand.

**WHITE VEIL**

*Equip Magic*

When the monster equipped with this card attacks, all Magic and Trap Cards on your opponent's side of the field are destroyed and their effects are negated. When the equipped monster is destroyed, take

damage to your Life Points equal to the ATK of the equipped monster.

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CARDS USED BY CHANCELLOR NAOYUKI KIYOTAKI:

**RED GADGET**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Machine, 1300/1500)*
When this card is Normal or Special Summoned, you can add 1 “Yellow Gadget” card from your Deck to your hand.

**PHILLIPS CURVE**
*Continuous Magic*
Raise the level of all Monsters in both player’s hands by 2. This effect is negated when the turn player controls no monsters.

**YELLOW GADGET**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Machine, 1200/1200)*
When this card is Normal or Special Summoned, you can add 1 “Green Gadget” card from your Deck to your hand.

**ANTIQUE GEAR KNIGHT (Ancient Gear Knight)**
*Dual Monster (LV4 Earth Machine, 1800/500)*

This card is treated as a Normal Monster while face-up on the field or in the Graveyard. If this card is face-up on the field, you may Normal Summon it to have it treated as an Effect Monster with this effect: If this card attacks, your opponent cannot activate Magic or Trap Cards until the end of the Damage Step.

**FORCE RELEASE (Unleash Your Power)**

*Instant Magic*

All Dual Monsters that were on your side of the field when this card was activated are treated as Effect Monsters and gain their effect(s). During the End Phase of this turn, flip all monsters affected by this card into face-down Defense Position.

**BEVERIDGE CURVE**

*Continuous Magic*

Both players must pay half of their Life Points before they may Special Summon a Monster. This cost is calculated after any other costs that must be paid.

**DIMINISHING RETURNS**

*Continuous Trap*

Each time a Monster inflicts battle damage, place 1 Return Counter on that Monster. Any battle damage that Monster inflicts is divided by two times the

number of Return Counters on it. (Round off the total amount to the next highest multiple of 5.) When this card is removed from the field, remove all Return Counters from all Monsters.

**POT OF GREED**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**ANTIQUE GEAR GARAGE (Ancient Gear Workshop)**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 “Antique Gear” Monster in your cemetery and place it in your hand.

**FEATHER OF THE PHOENIX GOD (A Feather of the Phoenix)**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 card in your cemetery and place it on top of your deck.

**ARMS HOLE**

*Normal Magic*

You may not Normal Summon or Set Monsters on the turn you activate this card. Send 1 card from the top of your deck to the cemetery and then select 1 Equip Magic Spell from your deck or cemetery and place it in your hand.

**GEAR GADGET DYNAMO**

*Equip Magic*

Activate only when the only monsters in your cemetery are 1 “Red Gadget”, 1 ‘Yellow Gadget’ and 1 “Green Gadget”. Pay 1000 life points and Special summon an “Antique Gear Gadjildragon” from your hand or deck and equip it with this card. When the equipped card attacks, remove a “Gadget” monster in your cemetery from play. The equipped monster gains the Tribute Summon effect of the chosen monster for this attack only. If the equipped monster would be destroyed by a card effect other than this one, you may remove a “Gadget” monster in your cemetery from play to negate its destruction. If this card is removed from the field or if there are no “Gadget” monsters in your cemetery during your End Phase, destroy the equipped monster.

**ANTIQUE GEAR GADJILDRAGON (Ancient Gear Gadjiltron Dragon)**

*Effect Monster (LV8 Earth Machine, 3000/2000)*

If this card attacks, your opponent cannot activate Magic or Trap card until the end of the Damage Step. If you Tribute Summon this card by sacrificing any of the following monster(s), this card gets the appropriate effect:

— “Green Gadget”: This monster inflicts piercing

damage.
— “Red Gadget”: When this monster inflicts Battle Damage to your opponent’s Life Points, inflict an additional 400 points of damage.
— “Yellow Gadget”: When this monster destroys an opponent’s monster in battle, inflict 600 points of damage to their Life Points.

**FOOLISH BURIAL**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Monster card from your deck and send it to your cemetery.

# 6. A Legend and a Dragon

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (). Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Six: "A Legend and a Dragon: Shougo's Memory"***

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Early morning one day in the Osiris Red dorms, all the students had gathered in the meeting hall. In the time since Kiyotaki had become Chancellor of Duel Academia, the Osiris and Ra dorms had

expanded considerably, plus they were now co-ed dorms, avoiding the automatic “girls go to Obelisk” rule.

An elderly lady appeared in the meeting hall, wearing a maroon red blouse and dress. She looked kind, but somewhat weary.

“My name is Mayako Matsutani,” she said. “I’m the head teacher of Osiris Red. I’m sorry I haven’t been in the past week or so, but it’s very nice to meet you all at last.”

The students all greeted their teacher politely.

“There are some new faces here, and while you’ve got a long day of learning ahead of you, I’d like to take the opportunity here in homeroom to know you individually. To start, we’ll go around and talk to the new students. Tell us a little about yourselves, and why you came to this school. What you enjoy about dueling. All these things are important to me and to your future here at Duel Academia.”

She got down from the podium and went around the room, seeing each individual first-year student and questioning them about their dreams in regards to Duel Monsters. Shougo fidgeted in his seat as his

sensei approached. When she got to him and asked him why he played Duel Monsters, butterflies in his stomach waged war and he stared at the ground.

“I’ll pass…”

“Aoyama-kun?”

“Please, Matsutani-sensei… it’s kind of personal to me.”

Shougo looked down away from the teacher and tried to shield his ears from all the whispers that already started.

“That’s fine, Aoyama-kun. I understand. Let’s move on to the next first-year. Watanabe-kun…”

Chiba glanced at his roommate and friend, who just looked away. *He must still be upset over his loss to Toragami-san*, he thought. *But still, I do want to know… maybe I’ll ask him later today.*

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Chiba and Shougo were back at their dorm room after a day of classes. Both were exhausted and ready to rest, but Chiba was curious about something.

“Shougo-kun,” he asked. “About today’s homeroom…”

Shougo nodded. “You want to know why I skipped Matsutani-sensei’s questions,” he said. “It’s just that nobody believes me when I tell the story of how I became a Duelist.”

“Nobody believes you? Why?”

“Well… it’s that… I always liked dueling but… I started being a Duelist after meeting the King of Duelists.”

“Mutou Yugi?” Chiba sat down on his bed. “Is that possible? Didn’t he retire some time ago?”

“I know,” Shougo said. “I don’t know how to explain it but… it happened when I was about twelve years old.”

“That’s only two years ago, though. Yugi-san’s retired since…”

“I know! I thought maybe you of all people would believe me, Chiba-kun…”

“No, no. I want to hear what happened to you.”

“It sounds unbelievable but I know it happened,” Shougo said. “It started the day I got my favorite

card. The Red-Eyes Black Dragon…”

---

*“You here to buy cards too?” one of the boys asked.*

*“Heh… what’s the point? You’ll never win, no matter what cards you get,” another one said, and all three of them started laughing as they headed out the door.*

*Shougo sighed.* They’re probably right, *he thought to himself. He considered just leaving when the old lady who ran the shop called out to him.*

*“Come on in… you wanted to buy some cards, didn’t you?”*

*Shougo blinked, then nodded and ran to the counter where a set of booster packs awaited him. He looked through the sealed packs. “Yeah… I like Duel Monsters. But… I’m too weak…”*

*“Do you know what a ‘duelist’ is?” the woman asked.*

*“Of course… they’re the players who fight in Duel Monsters. I would like to be one too… my dream is to be a great duelist.”*

*The old lady chuckled and smiled. "Dreams are nice."*

*Shougo then settled on a particular pack. "I'll take this one," he said, putting his money down. He then opened it up and looked through the cards. There was Kuriboh and Blood Vorse, but one particular card jumped out at him.*

*"…the Red-Eyes Black Dragon!" he gasped.*

*"That's a very rare card," the old lady said, equally impressed. "In terms of the legendary rare cards, it's second only to the Blue-Eyes White Dragon."*

*"Legendary rare cards?"*

*"'The blue dragon brings victory, but the red dragon brings possibility.' That's the way the legend goes. However, only people with the will to fight can use these legendary cards."*

*Shougo's face fell, and the disappointment in his spirit was clear. "Will to fight…?"*

*"It's up to you to continue to gather cards with potential," she went on. "But whether you do or not depends on your will to fight."*

*“Red-Eyes,” Shougo said. “The legendary card…”*

---

“So that was the day you got your favorite card,” Chiba said, nodding. “I remember that day well myself… when I got my favorite card, that is.”

“Yeah, it’s very special, isn’t it?” Shougo nodded. “When I saw that card, I felt like everything about me could change, for the first time.”

“That’s how you felt?”

Shougo nodded.

Chiba clicked his tongue. “Maybe it’s silly to think in this way, but I think people have connections to their cards in this game. Maybe you were destined to find the Red-Eyes… perhaps you have a connection…?”

“No,” Shougo said reflexively. “No… no, I don’t think so. It’s a big and frightening dragon. I don’t feel like I’m like that… but like I said, I felt that card could help me change myself.”

“Well, the connections to our cards are based on how we feel about ourselves… I don’t think they

can change who you are. That would defeat the purpose."

Shougo laid back in his bed. "That's something to think about, I guess. But back then… I thought, now that I have this card, I had become the best. There was no need to fight."

"You didn't really think that, did you?"

"I'm pretty good at fooling myself, Chiba-kun," Shougo chuckled mirthfully. "At the time, I was only concerned with making sure everyone knew there was no point to challenging me…"

---

*In a Duel Monsters center in Domino City, Shougo spotted the same three boys that had bothered him in the card shop. He walked up to them, holding his deck carrier.*

*"Hey, it's Shougo-kun," one of the boys said.*

*"Did you come here to lose some more?" another one of them jeered.*

*Shougo narrowed his eyes and glanced up at them. "You're the ones who are going to lose," he said. Then he dropped his eyes back down.*

*The three got angry. “What did you say? We’ll lose to you?” one said.*

*“We haven’t even dueled yet, so how would you know?” the other shouted.*

*The last one got behind Shougo and smimrked. “Or do you want us to beat you down again? Is that it?”*

*Shougo muttered, not looking them in the eyes. “But… I’ll never lose because… because…” Then he suddenly shouted. “I have the Red-Eyes Black Dragon card!”*

*Everyone in the Duel Monsters center was jarred to attention by Shougo’s claim.*

*One of the boys tried to call his bluff. “No way, you liar! Someone like you could never get such a legendary card…”*

*But shougo opened his deck container and showed them the proof… the card face-up on top of his deck.*

*“He really has it…”*

*“The Red-Eyes Black Dragon!”*

*“That’s right!” Shougo said. “Me and my dragon are more powerful than anyone. So there’s no need to even fight!”*

*With that, he left the Duel Monsters center.*

---

“So… that’s what you really thought… Shougo-kun? That with a powerful card, you didn’t have to fight.”

“Yes… that was my mindset then,” Shougo replied. “I was scared of fighting, but I wanted to be a great duelist. I thought that by getting the Red-Eyes, people would acknowledge me.”

Chiba shook his head. “But you know better now, don’t you?”

Shougo put his head in his hands. “One day, I was invited to a Duel Monsters tournament. It was an invitation from Kaiba Seto.”

Chiba’s eyes widened as big as saucers. “You got an invite from Kaiba-sama?”

“Yeah. But I didn’t go. And… he tried to force me. That’s when I met Yugi-san and Jonouchi-san.”

“Amazing! You saw the three legendary duelists all at once! But… still, how is that possible?”

Shougo sighed again. “I know you probably don’t believe me…”

“I believe you, Shougo-kun,” Chiba stopped him. “Why would you lie about it?”

“A few reasons I can think of. But I know what happened… Jonouchi-san helped me and Yugi-san escape. And then he talked to me. He said… ‘Are you really happy this way?’”

Shougo got up from off his bed and opened his drawer, taking out his deck.

“Then one of Kaiba’s employees came, and stole my Red-Eyes.”

“Stole it? That’s terrible.”

“Maybe. But it needed to happen. In any case, Jonouchi-san went to get the card. Yugi-san and I went to the stadium. There…”

---

*Yugi and Shougo ran to where Jonouchi lay on the ground. He was beaten and bruised and*

*struggling to get up.*

*Yugi helped his friend up while Shougo stayed back a distance.*

*"Yugi…" Jonouchi muttered. "I got… the Red-Eyes card back, somehow. But… Kaiba has your Millennium Puzzle."*

*"Jonouchi-kun!" Yugi said as Jonouchi slumped over. "Kaiba-kun… what he's done… is unforgivable!"*

*"He's not worth fighting against as a duelist," Jonouchi said. "But I won't rest until someone beats him down!"*

*Shougo looked down and clenched and unclenched his fists.*

*Jonouchi offered Shougo the Red-Eyes. "Shougo, will you beat him with this card? Or do you really think you can defeat him without even fighting?"*

*Shougo closed his eyes and started to sob. "I… I…" He then fell to his knees and started crying. "The truth is… I'm just scared! What if… what if I use Red-Eyes and still lose? I'll never be able to stand up again! If I don't fight, I can at least pretend I'm strong, right?"*

*“Listen to yourself!” Jonouchi got angry and grabbed Shougo by the shoulders. “Don’t you want to be a duelist?”*

*“I can’t!” Shougo shouted, and pushed Jonouchi away. He ran off, dropping his deck, but was too weary to go very far.*

*Yugi got up.*

*“You don’t have to fight, Shougo-kun,” he said. “I will.”*

*Shougo gasped.*

*“I can’t forgive Kaiba-kun’s methods,” he went on. “I’ll put an end to this.”*

*“That’s the way, Yugi!” Jonouchi said. He then picked up Shougo’s deck and returned it to him. ‘Watch the game, Shougo,’ he said. “See how Yugi beats that Kaiba bastard’s ass down!”*

*Shougo looked down and nodded.*

---

“Awesome, Shougo-kun!” Chiba was up on his feet with his fists raised. “Simply awesome… you saw the two greatest duelists ever fight!”

“It wasn’t awesome for me,” Shougo admitted. “I was scared the whole time. It was the first appearance of the Duel Disk system and everything looked so real. I didn’t understand… why everyone else wasn’t… I knew it was just a game but still…”

“Well, I’m sure the tension must have been overwhelming,” Chiba said. “So… did Kaiba-san play that card?”

“The Blue-Eyes White Dragon,” Shougo nodded. “Everyone was amazed. But I could barely even watch. It was because of Jonouchi-san that I was able to sit through the whole thing.”

“So… did Yugi-san beat the Blue Eyes?”

“He beat one of them,” Shougo said. “I remember that well. But then, Kaiba summoned another one.”

“True… Kaiba does have three Blue-Eyes.”

“And he fused them all together into one creature. I almost ran away when that happened. It was terrible.”

Chiba entered a thinking pose. “Why not attack with all three separately?”

“I… I don’t know. But then, Yugi-san drew my Red-Eyes… and…”

*In the old days of Duel Monsters, you could only attack with one monster at a time,* he thought to himself. *And direct attacks were forbidden. So given those rules, it would be better to bring all 3 Blue-Eyes together. This clinches it. As unbelievable as it sounds, Shougo-kun must be telling the truth about knowing Yugi-san and Kaiba-san.*

"So what happened?" Chiba asked.

---

*"Don't run away!" Jonouchi shouted, holding Shougo's arm and preventing him from leaving.*

*"But… but there's no point in staying! He'll lose!"*

*"This game is your game too," Jonouchi said. "Look at the card Yugi drew… it has my blood on it. It's your Red-Eyes Black Dragon."*

*"Why…" Shougo looked at his deck container, but the card was missing.*

*"When you dropped your cards, I switched it," Jonouchi explained. "I can't change your mind. You wouldn't fight yet you wanted to be a great Duelist. I couldn't take it anymore! You shouldn't hold cards and just dream of being a Duelist."*

*Shougo sat back down and watched as Yugi kept defending with other Monsters, none of them being able to stand up to the three combined Blue-Eyes dragons.*

*"Why isn't Yugi-niisan using the Red-Eyes?"*

*"Of course he won't use it," Jonouchi said. "Not until you show the will to fight."*

*Yugi summoned Meteor Dragon in defense mode, but then Kaiba played the card "Defense Paralysis", forcing the Meteor Dragon into attack mode. He then ended his turn, unable to attack because of the effect of the card.*

*"Do you understand, Shougo?" Jonouchi said. "The only hope Yugi has now is with the Red-Eyes."*

*"But what if he plays it and loses anyway?" Shougo whimpered. "The duel's an ante duel. Kaiba will take the Red-Eyes away, and then… and then… I'll go back to the old me, never getting any respect, always being made fun of. I don't want that!"*

*He closed his eyes and sobbed, remembering Yugi's questions earlier, before the Red-Eyes was taken away by Kaiba. 'Are you really happy this way? Is this really what you want? Isn't your dream to be a great Duelist?'*

*Shougo then heard Kaiba and Yugi talk to each other.*

*"This is over, Yugi," Kaiba said. "You have nothing left to stop me."*

*Yugi was unshaken. "I'll never give up," he said. "The Duelist's true strength is believing you can win, and having the courage to fight to the bitter end.'"*

*"Courage?" Shougo asked himself. "'The will to fight'… is that what courage is?"*

*"You don't get courage by dreaming about it," Jonouchi said. "You get it yourself!"*

*Shougo clenched his fists, going through the shop owner's words a thousand times in his head. If he wanted his dream to come true… yes… he'd have to accomplish it himself! And it would start here…*

*"I'll do it…" Shougo said. 'I'll fight!' At Jonouchi's prompting, he shouted louder. "Use it, Yugi-niisan… use my Red-Eyes Black Dragon!"*

*"I was waiting for those words!" Yugi said. "I summon Red-Eyes Black Dragon!"*

*Everyone in the stadium was amazed at the first visual appearance of the legendary rare dragon.*

*“‘The blue dragon brings victory, but the red dragon brings possibility,’” Yugi said as the monster appeared.*

*“Your ‘possibility’ is for nothing!” Kaiba yelled. “The Red-Eyes cannot beat one Blue-Eyes, let alone three!”*

*“Magic card, ‘Fusion’ activates!” Yugi responded. “I’ll fuse Red-Eyes Black Dragon and Meteor Dragon together… to create…”*

*Everyone in the audience was even more impressed as the two monsters merged together…*

---

“…and? Did Yugi win?”

“I think so,” Shougo said. “But… I don’t… really remember.”

“Oh, you’re cruel, Shougo!” Chiba shouted, eyes wide. “To tell that whole story and not even reveal the end!”

“But I really don’t remember,” Shougo said with a weak smile. “I know that the Red-Eyes and the Meteor Dragon create the Meteor Black Dragon. But that can’t beat 3 Blue-Eyes, either.”

“You’re right,” Chiba nodded.

“And I also know the game has changed a lot since then. A lot has happened, and I don’t know where I was for most of it. Maybe it was losing my parents so early that made it so hard to remember. I just know that much… that much did happen. I remember Yugi-san’s words and I’ve been trying to understand them.”

“Shougo-kun, I know that’s really important to you,” Chiba answered. “Just don’t forget to be true to yourself while you do it. You can’t force yourself.”

“I know. I remember you told me that before. I just… after my duel with Toragami-san… I’m wondering if maybe… I’m wasting my time?”

Chiba got to his feet again, fists clenched. “Forget about that girl, Shougo! She’s just trying to get in your head! Don’t waste the lesson that Jonouchi-san and Yugi-san tried to teach you!”

Shougo blinked again and looked up at Chiba. “So… you believe me?”

“What kind of friend would I be if I didn’t?” Chiba said. “In any case, I think what you really might need is just a motivation to fight, instead of

just a reason to win. You're not a bad person if you lose. I've certainly lost my fair share of duels, and I'm still here!"

"Yeah, I know… it's just… just…" Shougo sighed. "I wish I knew what it was."

"I'm sure you'll find out eventually," Chiba said. "Come on, it's time for bed. We have another full day of school tomorrow."

"Yeah, you're right. Goodnight, Chiba-kun…"

---

Shougo slept restlessly.

He could see clearly, in his dream, the Judgment Dragoon blasting him away. It was replaced by the Lightlord Dragon Gragonith which utterly destroyed him. The battle replayed in his head over and over.

"Losers should stay on the ground until the winner leaves!" Hinata Toragami harrumphed as the environment around Shougo became bleached white, and just left Shougo to stew in his own juices.

Shougo struggled to his feet and punched the ground.

“Damn it… if only I was stronger… I just need to be stronger!”

“Hm hm hm hm… you want to be stronger… I can make you stronger…”

“Who’s that? Who’s there?”

The white background was absorbed by a darkness that seeped through the area where Toragami just left.

“As long as you fear the darkness, you will never know your true power. You must embrace it with all of your soul!”

“No… no way… go away… go!”

“Very well,” the voice chuckled. “But know this, Aoyama Shougo… you called me here… and I will come as long as you continue to call for me.”

He then heard voices from his past and his present, encouraging him, as he seemed to fall into the darkness, unable to escape it.

“We believe in you!” Tenjouin-sensei’s voice.

“You shouldn’t hold cards while simply dreaming of being a duelist!” Jonouchi-san.

“Don’t hold back just because we’re friends,” Chiba-kun’s voice.

And then a shining golden light seemed to strike Shougo’s body, and a voice echoed in his head as he woke up with a scream.

“Show me… your Duelist’s courage!”

Shougo breathed heavily and glanced at the clock. 2:12am…

He thought about going outside, remembered his dream and decided against it…

---

A boat approached Duel Academia Island in the middle of the night. The lone security guard working the shores noticed it and, not expecting any visitors, ran to see who was on the boat.

“What are you doing here this late at night?” he asked, shining a flashlight into the boat.

A young man exited the cabin; well-dressed and tall, with somewhat long brown hair. His eyes were large and skin was light; he appeared to be American. He held a small book in his hand.

He opened his book and flipped through it. "*Ey go gah honey shih moss ka?*"

"Excuse me?" the security guard blinked, to which the man responded with a more coherent response — "Do you speak English?" in somewhat stilted Japanese.

"No, I'm sorry, Sir," the guard replied in the little English he knew. "Can I help you?"

The man reverted to his stammering Japanese. "I need to see Chancellor Kiyotaki," he said. "I'm Mark Walker, from the American Duel University."

"And why would you come at this late hour?" the guard narrowed his eyes.

"*Go men nasai*. Jetlag."

The guard titled his head and sighed. "You don't seem like a bad person. But you'll have to wait here until the morning, okay, Walker-san?"

"*Domo arigato!*" Walker bowed awkwardly, leaving the guard to walk off shaking his head.

Walker then looked over the Duel Academia buildings. *Well, here I am at last,* he thought to himself. *Time to show everyone what an American can do!*

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Normal Monster "Red-Eyes Black Dragon"***
Level 7, 2400 attack power, 2000 defense power. In the early days of Duel Monsters, this card was nearly on equal footing with the legendary Blue-Eyes White Dragon. While outclassed in sheer power by the Blue-Eyes, the Red-Eyes continues to evolve in potential through its many forms, including the fearsome Red-Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon.

---

**Chiba:** "In the next day, a duelist from an American school shows up in Duel Academia!"
**Shougo:** "He can't speak Japanese very well and I can barely understand him…"
**Chiba:** "What's more, he's come with one explicit purpose — to duel Toragami Hinata!"
**Shougo:** "He must be good if that's his goal!"
**Chiba:** "But Toragami-san's friends won't have it at all! One of them challenges him to a duel for the right to enter the school!"
**Shougo:** "That girl Katsuki-san? I've never seen *her* play before."
**Chiba:** "Guess we'll see what her style is! Next

time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'I'm From Hollywood! The Aloof American Duelist**'"
**Shougo:** "Hollywood? Wow!…"

# 7. I'm from Hollywood!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (). Thank you very much for reading.*

*Special thanks to Nightmare Dreams for inspiring the character of Mark Walker.*

---

**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Seven: "I'm From Hollywood! The Aloof American Duelist"***

---

“Excuse me?!” Tenjouin exclaimed indignantly, slapping her hands on the desk.

“I said, a student from Duel University America wants an exhibition match against Toragami Hinata,” one of her assistants said.

The head teachers were gathered in the faculty building to discuss the newest development in Duel Academia this year — an American duelist traveling to the island in hopes of finding a challenge.

“No, no, no!” Tenjouin exclaimed. “Does he have any idea how disruptive that is? Who does he think he is?”

“He is currently at the top of his class,” Matsutani said. “According to my reports, he’s come here in hopes of improving the name of American duelists.”

“That’s exactly why they have such a bad name in the first place,” the lead Ra teacher, Toshiro Abe, grumbled. “Americans seem to have the idea that they can walk right in and everyone will accept them just because they’re American.”

“That’s not all,” Tenjouin’s assistant said. “He wants to register as a transfer student to Duel Academia.”

“Now that is just ridiculous,” Tenjouin replied. “If he wanted to come to this school, he could have taken the exam like e…”

A beep resounded in the room. “Tenjouin-san, we’re being contacted by the Chancellor.”

Tenjouin sighed. *The timing couldn’t be worse*, she thought to herself. “Put it on audio.”

The voice of Kiyotaki came over the intercom. “I’ve heard about the American boy wanting to challenge the Blitzkrieg Queen.”

“Yes, we were just discussing it now,” Tenjouin said.

“I’d hate to send the boy home empty-handed,” the Chancellor replied.

“You cannot actually be considering acce…”

And for the second time this meeting, Tenjouin was interrupted, this time by the doors to the room being thrown open. Naomi Aino and Shiho Katsuki, Toragami’s closest friends, barged into the room.

Tenjouin got up out of her chair, her tolerance reaching her limit. “Excuse me! This is a closed faculty meeting!” she shouted.

“Well, this is an emergency!” Katsuki shouted. “We heard about the American boy, and wanted to make sure you didn’t make a mistake!”

Abe blinked and pushed his glasses up. “How did you even know about this meeting, anyway?”

“Being friends of Toragami-sama has its privileges,” Aino said.

“I don’t take kindly to the cheek of a foreigner thinking he can set the terms of his presence,” Katsuki went on. “Tenjouin-sensei… let me duel him. I’ll put him in his place in front of the entire school.”

“Katsuki-chan!” Aino shouted. “You never told me about this.”

“Because you would try to stop me,” Katsuki replied.

“Hmmm…” the Chancellor, having heard the discussion, was deep in thought. “It’s interesting. It should raise some publicity to have an exhibition duel between an American and one of our students.”

Tenjouin’s eyes widened. *I had a feeling something like this would happen*, she thought to

herself. *Kiyotaki-kouchou, what could possibly be on your mind?*

“I’ll have one of my assistants talk to the American and set the time,” he went on. “In the meantime, let’s try to keep this from the student body. It would cause too much of a disruption. I’ll adjourn this meeting for now.”

---

Shougo and Chiba were walking around campus and noticed there was a lot of commotion. Students were talking to each other about some duelist that had appeared on the island.

“Did you hear? A duelist from America…”

“…I hear Americans all play with banned cards…”

“…a Duel University in America? Meaningless!”

Shougo nudged his friend. “Are you hearing what they’re saying?”

“Yes, Shougo-kun,” Chiba said. “Maybe I should fill you in.”

“Fill me in?”

Chiba paused and put his belongings on the ground, then adjusted his glasses and raised his finger in the air, as if giving a lecture.

“Japan isn’t the only place where Duel Monsters is popular,” he said. “It’s played in many other countries, including the United States. But American duelists have been decidely defeated every time they come to Japan. Many say it’s because of their gameplay styles — they have very uniform strategies.”

“Uniform strategies?” Shougo was somewhat confused.

“In other words, they all play the same. Americans tend to focus on the Emperor cards.”

Shougo felt more and more out of the loop. He tended to focus on his own deck, and never worried too much about any other cards unless he was dueling against them.

“Thunder Emperor Zaborg, Ice Emperor Mobius, Fire Emperor Thestalos, Earth Emperor Granmarg, Wind Emperor Riser and Wicked Emperor Gaius,” Chiba said. “These monsters all have the power to remove cards when they are summoned with a

sacrifice. As such, American duelists have focused on getting these cards out quickly."

"They seem powerful, then," Shougo said.

"Well, Japanese duelists used them for awhile, then ceased to. They saw them as too easy to use. Besides, even without using Emperors, Japanese duelists still have decisively beat Americans in every international tournament."

Shougo put his hand to his chin, thinking. "Are Emperors really banned?"

"Not banned, but duelists tend to shun you if you use them. So they're often referred to as 'banned' even though they're not actually restricted. Very few cards have actually been deemed too powerful to use in tournaments."

"Hmm… I wonder who this American person is."

"I wonder too!"

A voice speaking in somewhat halting Japanese broke Chiba's and Shougo's conversation. He was tall, wearing sunglasses and his skin was light and he wasn't wearing a Duel Academia uniform. *Could this be him?* Shougo thought.

Chiba just stood there a moment looking him over.

"*Konnichi wa*," the stranger said. "*Ore no namae wa* Mark Walker. *Eigo ga hanashimasu ka*?"

"Hello, Mr. Walker," Chiba said, speaking in decent English. "I speak a little English. Not well, though."

Shougo looked down — he didn't understand English at all.

"My name is Katsurou Chiba, and this is Shougo Aoyama. I don't think he speaks English."

"Oh, *gomen*," Mark said, reverting to his stilted Japanese. "Excuse my rudeness. I don't want to leave you out, Shougo-san. My Japanese is not very good."

"It's okay," Shougo said. Definite American accent, but it wasn't horrible.

"Let's go somewhere less obvious," Mark said. "Lead the way."

Chiba nodded. "Come on, Shougo-kun," he said.

---

The “less obvious” place? Outside the Osiris Red lavatories.

“Are you sure this is a good place?” Mark said uneasily.

“Trust me, nobody comes here unless they absolutely have to,” Chiba said.

Mark rubbed the back of his head and looked around. “The thing is, I’m here from the American Duel University. They sent me as a representative, and hopefully as a transfer student. But they screwed up with the timing… I ended up here just after registration.”

“Oh, I see,” Shougo said.

“That’s not all, though. I also hope to duel that famous person… the one they say is unbeatable?”

Shougo got nervous.

“You mean Toragami Hinata,” Chiba said.

“Yes, that’s her.”

“You should be very careful,” Chiba replied. “It goes without saying, but she’s a formidable opponent. I’ve seen her duel.”

“I don’t really care about reputations,” Mark said and winked. “As far as I’m concerned, I’m the best duelist on this island!”

Chiba and Shougo looked at each other.

“You talk like you’ve never lost before,” Shougo said.

“I’ve lost my fair share. But that doesn’t matter. As long as I pick myself up and try again, that’s all that matters.”

A female voice chimed up from behind them. “That is fine talk coming from an American loser like you!”

Katsuki and Aino had appeared there as well.

“We were looking for you,” Aino said.

“Who are these chicks?” Mark asked Chiba in English.

Chiba frowned a bit. “Friends of Toragami-san,” he replied in Japanese. “Shiho Katsuki and Naomi Aino.”

Mark nodded and turned towards them. “I heard the Japanese were very respectful,” he said. “But

like all the rumors about Americans, those seem to not be true either."

"You're not going to win many friends with that attitude," Aino said.

"I don't need to win friends. I just need to win duels."

Chiba and Shougo were shocked at Mark's attitude.

Katsuki scoffed and rolled her eyes. "I don't know how they do things in Hollywood, *gaijin-san*," she said, "but you have to back up your words here. In case you haven't heard, I'm going to be your opponent tonight."

"You?! I'm sorry, but I want to fight Toragami." Mark said dismissively.

"You're a thousand years too early to even set foot in the same country as Toragami-sama," she said. "This is the deal the teachers are offering you. If you can defeat me, you can enroll in this school. But if you lose, you have to leave and never show your face here again."

"Fair deal… you're on." Mark said in English. "Oh, and… I'm not from Hollywood. I'm from

Omaha."

"Whatever," Katsuki said. "Come on, Naomi-chan, let's go."

"One minute. I have a few things I want to tell this boy. You go and get ready."

Katsuki just nodded and left.

Aino glared at Mark and they had an exchange in English which neither Shougo nor Chiba could understand. Mark nodded a few times and then sighed deeply.

He turned to the Osiris students. "You two have been friendly with me and I appreciate it," he said in Japanese. "Aino-san, also, has been forgiving. But if I have to fight this Katsuki person to get to my goal, then I'm going to just have to do my best."

"It's okay, Walker-san," Chiba said. "I actually hope to see a good duel. I've never seen an American duel before."

"Yeah, me too," Shougo stammered, and hurriedly added. "And I hope you win."

Aino, contrary to the two Osiris' students expectations, smiled. "Toragami-sama is away from the island handling zaibatsu issues," she said.

“Please come to the convention hall and watch Katsuki-chan?”

Chiba looked at Shougo, who just nodded. He gave a certain amount of trust to Aino for being at least somewhat kind.

“I have to go and get ready,” Mark said. “It’s good that I at least met a few nice people on the island.”

“I need to go too,” Aino added. “Mr. Walker, be careful. Katsuki-chan’s deck is deceptive. If you’re not careful, you may lose.”

“I’ve come across a lot of surprises before. Don’t worry about me.”

The two of them went their separate ways.

“Aino Naomi… she’s a strange person, I think,” Chiba thought aloud.

Shougo rubbed the back of his head. He thought she was nice…

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The conference room was gathered with a collection of students for the evening’s event.

Shougo and Chiba entered, and spotted Aino sitting in an area off on her own, waving them towards her.

“I’m glad you came, Chiba-san, Aoyama-san,” Aino said.

“I was wondering why you want us with you,” Chiba said, taking a seat. “You know we can’t cheer for your friend, don’t you?”

“I’m here to support Katsuki-chan, of course. But I’m concerned. She suggested this duel without talking to me about it first. And Katsuki-chan tends to get a bit… cocky.”

“Well, everyone here seems to be excited,” Shougo said, observing the crowd.

“People aren’t actually expecting much out of this duel,” Aino said. “You must have heard of the reputation that American duelists have.”

“That’s… that’s kind of why I want Walker-san to win,” Shougo said. “They say the same things about me.”

Aino sighed and crossed her arms, looking out at the duel arena. “Aoyama-kun,” she said. “It’s true that I’m Toragami-sama’s friend, but you should

know that I don’t approve of the way she treated you when you met.”

Shougo looked down at his hands.

“If that’s true, why didn’t you stop her?” Chiba asked. “You could see she was being cruel.”

Aino sighed and wrung her hands together. “Let’s just say my family owes hers a debt and leave it at that,” she said.

One of Asuka Tenjouin’s assistants was standing in the middle of the duel arena serving as introduction. He had a loud and carrying voice. “Let us begin the first exhibition duel of the year,” he said. “We have American duelist Mark Walker battling against our own Obelisk Blue student, Katsuki Shiho. Mark-sama is dueling for his right to enter our school.

“Entering now is the challenger, Mark Walker!”

Cheers mixed with boos filled the room when Mark Walker ran in, waving to everyone. He seemed to relish his apparent controversy.

“And his opponent,” the assistant said. “Katsuki Shiho!”

Katsuki stood on the arena, appearing very calm and composed as she brushed her hair back and loaded her duel disk.

“Let’s get this show on the road!” Mark said as he strolled on the arena, raising and activating his duel disk.

“Whatever you want, *maruku-inu*,” Katsuki snickered, raising her own.

“Duel!” they shouted in unison.

“I know you’d say ‘ladies first’,” Katsuki said, saying ‘ladies first’ in English. “But as your host, I insist you take the first move.”

“I wasn’t planning on giving it to you anyway,” Mark said. “My turn. I draw! And now I’ll summon Mother Grizzly in defense mode.”

A blue-grey bear appeared on the field and covered its body with its paws as it curled up.

***Grizzly Mother*** *— LV4 Water Beast (1000 DEF)*

“Next, I activate from my hand… ‘Foolish Burial’!” he said, stumbling a bit on the phrasing. “I’ll take a monster from my deck and put it in the cemetery.”

He fanned his deck out and showed Katsuki the card he chose — the “Hades Frog”.

“I’ll send Treeborn Frog to the graveyard, and that’s all!”

Katsuki swung her hair back and grinned evilly. “Play is play, but now I’ll show you what a real duelist can do, loser. I summon to the field… Allure Queen, Level 3, in attack mode.”

A young woman in Victorian dress with flames shooting out of her black-gloved fingertips appeared on the field. Her hair was brown and short cut, and she held a golden staff with a ruby on its tip.

***Allure Queen Level 3*** *— LV3 Dark Spellcaster (500 ATK)*

“Allure Queen?” Mark couldn’t help but scoff. “Those cards are terrible! You can’t even level her up without attaching one of my monsters to yours, and what’s more — you can’t absorb a monster below level 4, so my Grizzly is safe.”

Katsuki chuckled exaggeratedly. “I wonder about that…”

“What?”

“I play the field spell card… ‘Court of the Allure Queen’!”

The duel arena shot off an image of a royal courtroom, complete with attendants, who surrounded the Allure Queen.

Aino observed this and clicked her tongue. “Who would have guessed that Katsuki-chan would get that card so early?”

“‘Court of the Allure Queen’…” Chiba said.

“I’ve never heard of that card,” Shougo added.

“It was a card that Katsuki’s family had specially made for her,” Aino explained. “It’s a one-of-a-kind card with a few abilities, the most important of which we’ll see right now.”

“Let’s get ready for the royal ceremony,” Katsuki said. “I activate Court of the Allure Queen’s effect. By removing from play one ‘Allure Queen’ card on my field, I can activate her effect to summon one of a higher level. Go… Allure Queen Level 5!”

The attendants surrounded the young queen, with much bustle and tussle. When they backed away, the Allure Queen had grown quite a bit, appearing taller,

with a smaller red hat and a ribbon swirling behind her back.

***Allure Queen Level 5*** *— LV5 Dark Spellcaster (1000 ATK)*

“This is bad,” Mark said. “Real bad.”

“Yes, it is, loser,” Katsuki laughed. “My field spell lets me use my Allure Queen’s leveling up effects without having to have a monster equipped first. But now that level five is out, we don’t have to worry about that, will we? Allure Queen! Bring that bear to our side of the court.”

The Allure Queen blew a breath of magical fire towards Mark’s Grizzly Mother. The fire didn’t burn, but caused the bear to seem to fall asleep. Its hologram shimmered and faded, and then appeared on Katsuki’s side of the field, standing behind the Allure Queen.

“It seems the Queen has a new pet,” Katsuki said. “And it will remain hers… another nice effect of Court of the Allure Queen. You see, your Mother Grizzly belongs to me now… for the remainder of the Duel!”

Mark grit his teeth. “I never would have imagined that the Japanese used such low down and

dirty tricks. A card no one's seen before? How is that fair?"

"It keeps the game interesting, loser," Katsuki retorted. "A lot better than Emperor after Emperor like in the United States."

"I just don't understand why you reject viable strategies just because they're used often," Mark mused. "Doesn't that mean they're good?"

"Don't preach to me, loser dog," Katsuki shouted. "You should be barking at my heel! And now I'll force you to do so. Grizzly Mother, lend Allure Queen your power!"

The Queen raised her hands in the air and flames shot from Mark's monster card into her arms, powering her attack level up to 2400.

***Allure Queen Level 5*** *+1400 ATK (2400 ATK)*

"Allure Queen! Direct attack!"

Next, Katsuki's monster shot the flames in her hands into Mark's body. He shouted as the realistic hologram's effect overwhelmed his senses, and his life points dropped to 1600.

***Mark*** *— 4000 LP — 2400 — 1600 LP*

“I’ll set one card face down,” Katsuki went on. “Turn end. You know, it would be easier to just surrender now and save face.”

“This is not good,” Chiba said. “That field spell card makes Allure Queen a powerhouse, and even if Walker-san gets out a strong monster, it will just be absorbed!”

Aino nodded. “One thing’s for sure. Katsuki-chan is in control of the duel right now.”

Shougo just whimpered and watched. *Go, Walker-san… you can do it!*

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD: *The Field Magic Card, “Court of the Allure Queen”***
When this card is active and you have an “Allure Queen” card, you can level her up simply by removing the card from play. Also, “Allure Queen” will gain the power of the cards she equips, and those cards are considered to belong to you! Your opponent won’t be able to activate any other field magic cards, either.

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**Aino:** “So it looks like Katsuki-chan got a little carried away again.”
**Katsuki:** “Don’t say unnecessary things! You know I’m doing this for the good of the academy. Like a joker like him could get in.”
**Chiba:** “Walker-san seems to be overwhelmed by Katsuki-san’s moves. But he doesn’t give up.”
**Shougo:** “Go, Walker-san!”
**Aino:** “Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *‘Awaken! The Ocean Dragon Lord, Neo-Daedalus’*.**”
**Mark:** “Suspense! Intrigue! And a whole lotta me! Don’t miss it!”

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION:**

CARDS USED BY MARK WALKER:

**GRIZZLY MOTHER (Mother Grizzly)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Beast, 1400/1000)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, you may Special Summon 1 Water-attribute monster with 1500 ATK or less from your Deck in Attack Position.

**FOOLISH BURIAL**
*Normal Magic*

Select 1 Monster card from your deck and send it to your cemetery.

**HADES FROG (Treeborn Frog)**
*Effect Monster (L1 Water Aqua, 100/100)*
If this card is in your cemetery during your Standby Phase and your Magic/Trap Card Zone is clear, you may Special Summon it. This effect is negated if you control a “Hades Frog”.

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CARDS USED BY SHIHO KATSUKI:

**ALLURE QUEEN LV3**
*Effect Monster (L3 Dark Spellcaster, 500/500)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, you may select 1 Level 3 or lower monster on your opponent’s side of the field and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time may be equipped usin this effect.) If this card would be destroyed by battle, destroy the equipped monster instead. During your Standby Phase, if this card is equipped by its effect, send it to the cemetery to Special Summon 1 “Allure Queen LV5” from your hand or Deck.

**COURT OF THE ALLURE QUEEN**
*Field Magic*
Monster Cards equipped to “Allure Queen” cards

are considered owned by the ‘Allure Queen’’s owner for the remainder of the Duel. When you control a face-up “Allure Queen”, you gain the following effects:
— You may remove from play an “Allure Queen” Monster you control to activate its effect to Special Summon a card written on its text.
— “Allure Queen” Monsters gain ATK equal to the original ATK of any Monster Card equipped to it.
— No other Field Magic cards may be activated.

**ALLURE QUEEN LV5**
*Effect Monster (L5 Dark Spellcaster, 1000/1000)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, if this card was Special Summoned by the effect of “Allure Queen LV3”, you may select 1 Level 5 or lower monster on your opponent’s side of the field and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time may be equipped usin this effect.) If this card would be destroyed by battle, destroy the equipped monster instead. During your Standby Phase, if this card is equipped by its effect, send it to the cemetery to Special Summon 1 “Allure Queen LV7” from your hand or Deck.

# 8. Awaken! The Ocean Dragon Lord

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

*Special thanks to Nightmare Dreams for inspiring the character of Mark Walker.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Eight: "Awaken! The Ocean Dragon Lord, Neo-Daedalus"***

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Hinata Toragami stood in a duel arena facing her current opponent, a gangster who called himself Eraser who used cards that removed opponents' cards from play. They were dueling to settle an issue of ownership of a building that sat on land in which the Toragami group decided to invest.

Toragami found the idea of dueling to settle it silly, but she had reason to want to duel this person…

Eraser had 2100 lifepoints, a Macrocosmos, a set card and a D.D. Survivor out, while Toragami, despite not being able to play many basic Lightlord tactics, was nearly untouched with 3200 lifepoints and a Lightlord Warrior Garoth out.

"With my 'Macrocosmos' out, your strategy's useless," Eraser shouted, "You people with money think you can do anything. Well, if your family stands on your honor, you'll give up your claim on our land once I win!"

Toragami ignored his bluster. "My turn. Draw. I play the magic card 'Burial from a Different Dimension'."

Eraser chuckled. "I thought you'd do that. I activate my Trap, 'Declaration of God', and halve

my life points to negate your magic card." His life went down to 1050 and Toragami's card shimmered away.

But Toragami remained unmoved. "That's fine, because I have another one."

"W… what?!"

Toragami activated her second "Burial from a Different Dimension" card. "Yes, I had this card from the beginning, but I thought a weakling like you might be ready to jump on it. So I waited until now to play it. Do you need any more explanation?"

She then removed Lightlords Paladin Jean, Beast Wolf and Magician Leila from her side pocket and placed them in the graveyard.

"With these and Raikou in my graveyard, I will now summon Judgment Dragoon."

The fearsome feathered dragon appeared on the field, and Eraser took a step back. "I-impossible," he muttered. "I had your strategy figured out!"

Toragami closed her eyes in disgust. "Judgment Dragoon… end this pitiful farce."

In a moment, the arena was blinded by Judgment Dragoon's destruction effect, and after its attack,

Eraser’s life points hit 0, ending the duel.

Toragami did not wait to see if her opponent was alright. “Come,” she said to her attendants. “Our business here is concluded.”

But as she walked away from her win, her mind was on a memory…

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“Allure Queen! Direct attack!”

Mark’s life points dropped to 1600 from the direct attack.

***Mark** — 4000 LP — 2400 = 1600 LP*

“I’ll set one card face down,” Katsuki went on. “Turn end. You know, it would be easier to just surrender now and save face.”

“Do I look lik I’m going to surrender? Let’s get this show on the road,” Mark said. “My turn. And during my standby phase, the effect of Treeborn Frog activates, letting me special summon it to the field in defense mode.”

A bandaged white frog with a halo on its head appeared on the field, comically holding its flippers

up as if to protect itself.

***Hades Frog*** *— LV1 Water Aqua (100 DEF)*

“Next, I’m going to activate the monster effect of the Warrior of Atlantis in my hand. By placing him into the graveyard, I can add A Legendary Ocean to my hand.”

He placed the monster card into his graveyard slot, then fanned out his deck once again, quickly finding the card he needed, placing it in his hand. “And I’ll play it now,” he went on, opening the field spell slot and trying to place the card in.

But an electric shock prevented him from doing so.

Katsuki laughed uproariously. “You should brush up on your Japanese,” she said. “Otherwise you might have been able to read my field spell’s card effect.”

“Excuse me?”

“When I have an Allure Queen card in play, no other field spells can be used,” Katsuki said. “Nice try, loser.”

Mark frowned and held his duel disk out in front of him. “Fine. I don’t need the spell. I’m going to

tribute Treeborn Frog… so I can summon… Mobius the Frost Monarch!”

The frog’s hologram shimmered away to be replaced by the rising menace and snowstorm that accompanied the summoning of Mobius.

***Ice Emperor Moebius*** *— LV6 Water Aqua (2400 ATK)*

“Monarch?” Shougo asked Chiba.

“That’s what they call Emperors in America,” Chiba explained.

Aino shook her head wearily. “I guess that’s his big move,” she surmised. “Too bad Katsuki-chan was ready.”

And indeed she was. “Reverse card, open!” she shouted. “‘Tatami Flip’! It can activate when a monster with an effect is summoned. We all know very well what those Emperors can do — and this card will negate the summon and destroy your card. Go!”

Katsuki activated the card, which caused a straw mat to appear under Mobius. The giant armored creature fell on its back and shattered.

“Crap,” Mark muttered. “I’ll set one card facedown and end my turn.”

“This is looking bad,” Chiba said. “Katsuki-san is calling all of Walker-san’s moves.”

“It’s not hard when you come from a place where all anyone can do is the same old tactics,” Aino said.

Shougo looked down nervously.

Aino noticed this and crossed her arms. “But there’s one thing I know about Katsuki-chan. She gets sloppy when she fights someone she thinks she’s better than. She’s not like Toragami-sama at all.”

“What are you saying?” Chiba asked.

“Just watch,” was Aino’s reply.

“My turn, little man,” Katsuki jeered, continuing to taunt her opponent. “And now, because Allure Queen Level 5 is equipped with a monster, I’ll activate her effect. By sending her to the cemetery, I’ll level her up. Come out, Allure Queen Level 7!”

The Allure Queen evolved once again in a glow of magic, flames now flowing from her aura. Her staff now had a diamond on it and was much more

ornate. Her hair had grown long and several ribbons emerged from her back.

***Allure Queen Level 7*** *— LV7 Dark Spellcaster (1500 ATK)*

“Your grizzly bear, of course, will go to *my* graveyard, since the Queen’s taken a liking to her pet. Now, I activate from my hand… ‘Treasure from Heaven’!”

Aino slapped her forehead. “Why, Shiho-chan?” she muttered.

Both players drew until they had six cards in their hand.

“I activate the magic card ‘The Empty Tomb’,” Katsuki said, holding the card out. “I select a monster in your cemetery, and you summon it to your field in whatever position you like. I believe I will choose your Ice Emperor Mobius!”

“Fine,” Mark said. “I summon Mobius the Frost Monarch in attack mode.” The metallic monster returned to the field.

***Ice Emperor Moebius*** *— 2400 ATK*

“Now, Allure Queen, give me control of his creature!”

More magical fire came out of the Queen and surrounded Mark's monster. Like the Mother Grizzly before it, it was lulled into sleep before it shimmered away and appeared on Katsuki's field, at the beck and call of Allure Queen, whose power went up to 3400.

***Allure Queen Level 7*** *— +2400 (3400 ATK)*

"Now, my monster, let's end this fight. Attack directly with Seduction No. 7!"

"I was waiting for that!" Mark said. "Reverse card open… Malevolent Catastrophe!"

"Calamity of the Wicked," Aino said, and nodded. "I knew this would happen."

"Activate only when your opponent declares an attack," Shougo said. "Destroy all Magic and Trap cards on the field? Isn't that just like Heavy Storm?"

"It's an easier card to get, though," Chiba explained. "And as a trap card, you can play it on your opponent's turn, as long as they attack."

Mark and Katsuki shielded their bodies as tornadoes and lightning appeared in the Duel Arena, destroying Katsuki's Court spell, as well as the Mobius that Allure Queen was equipped to. The

hologram seemed to gasp as her aura of power faded, but her attack went on regardless.

***Allure Queen Level 7** — -2400 (1500 ATK)*

Mark's lifepoints dropped to 100.

***Mark** — 1600 LP — 1500 = 100 LP*

"So you managed to save yourself," Katsuki said, frowning deeply. "But let's see you survive my next turn. Turn end."

"Actually, I plan to," Mark said with a smile. "I was going to have to take a chance, but now thanks to you that won't be necessary."

"Eh?" Katsuki raised an eyebrow.

"First things first," Mark started. "My turn, draw!"

There was a brief pause. "Aren't you going to summon your Hades Frog?" Katsuki asked.

"As I said, that won't be necessary," he said. "I want him in the cemetery this turn. I'm going to remove him and Warrior of Atlantis from play so I can special summon this little beast… Fenrir! Come out!"

A shimmer appeared on the field, out from which came a ravenous wolf-creature with glowing red eyes and sharp claws.

***Fenrir*** *— LV4 Water Beast (1400 ATK)*

“That’s a cute dog,” Katsuki said. “It comes up short of my Allure Queen, though. Even after you wrecked my field, she still has 1500…”

She then gasped and touched her mouth.

“You figured it out,” Mark grinned. “I can play my field spell now. Let’s go, Legendary Ocean!” He slapped the card into the field spell slot, and an underwater cavern with ancient buildings surrounded the two.

Fenrir gained 200 attack points, enough to edge out the Allure Queen.

***Fenrir*** *— +200 ATK (1600 ATK)*

Mark thrust his fist out. “Fenrir! Attack Katsuki-san’s Allure Queen… Furious Howl!”

Shougo, Chiba and Aino were equally aghast at the horrible attack name.

The wolf slashed the Queen across the chest, and she screamed as she was destroyed. Katsuki lost 100

life points, the first blow she'd taken this match.

***Katsuki** — 4000 LP — 100 = 3900 LP*

She tried to hide her smile, though. *It's fine,* she thought to herself. *I have in my hand Magical Stone Excavation. I can get back my Court of the Allure Queen, then use my Premature Burial to bring back Allure Queen Level 5. He won't be able to survive no matter what he calls out now!*

"My turn isn't over yet," Mark said. "I haven't normal summoned this turn, and if you'll permit me, I will do so now. Fenrir! I sacrifice you to summon from my hand — Levia-Dragon — Daedalus!"

The wolf faded away, and in its place, a large blue and purple sea serpent appeared on the field, coiling around one of the Atlantis towers. The crowd gasped, impressed.

***Levia-Dragon — Daedalus** — LV7 WATER Sea Serpent (2600 ATK + 200 = 2800 ATK)*

"How did he do that?" Shougo asked. "Isn't Levia-Dragon a level 7 monster? That means it needs two sacrifices."

"The field spell — Legendary City Atlantis," Chiba explained. "It lowers the levels of all

monsters in the hand by one."

"I don't know why everyone is so fascinated," Aino said. "This is common strategy in America, just like the Emperors."

"It's a good move, though, because Walker-san can clear the field if he needs to," Chiba said.

Aino clicked her tongue. "That might not be enough. Levia-Dragon won't be able to attack this turn, and if Katsuki-chan is planning what I think she is, then that dragon will be fair game next turn."

Katsuki stared up at the water beast, her eyes wide. Then she regained control of herself. "Hmph. So what are you going to do? Waste your field spell to destroy my empty field? With all the cards I have in my hand, you might as w…"

Mark shook his finger. "You shouldn't interrupt a player. It's rude. One might question your upbringing."

Katsuki was infuriated.

"I am going to destroy the field," Mark went on. "But not with Levia-Dragon. I'm sacrificing him for his ultimate form."

The Levia-Dragon began to howl as the purple parts of his skin widened, the scales became more prominent, and it started to grow red wings. Another head sprouted from its neck, and it let out a massive scream as its evolution completed.

Mark raised his hand into the air, losing himself in the moment. “Behold… the ultimate sea serpent. The Ocean Dragon Lord… Neo-Daedalus!”

***Ocean Dragon Lord — Neo-Daedalus*** *— LV8 WATER Sea-Serpent (2900 ATK + 200 = 3100 ATK)*

The crowd was even more amazed, and this time even Aino was seen to let out a gasp.

“Impressed now?” Chiba asked.

“That’s not a card that is commonly seen,” Aino said, observing the creature. “It has 2900 attack points and a more powerful ability, but its summoning conditions are just too severe. It’s seen as a somewhat useless card.”

“Well, it seems like Walker-san found a way to use it,” Chiba said. Shougo nodded quietly, eyes on the duel arena.

“Ocean Dragon Lord’s effect now activates,” Mark said, opening his field spell slot on his duel

disk. “By sending a card called ‘Umi’ to the cemetery, all cards on the field are sent there as well. Fortunately… ‘A Legendary Ocean’ counts as ‘Umi’. Ocean Dragon Lord! Neo Levia Destruction, if you please.”

The field hologram melted away into water droplets which entered the sea serpent’s mouth. It then blasted the entire duel arena.

***Ocean Dragon Lord — Neo-Daedalus*** *— -200 ATK (2900 ATK)*

Mark bore a serious expression as the effect faded.

“So what?” Katsuki said. “You wasted your field spell to destroy an empty field! And you look like an idiot in front of the entire school.”

“You should brush up on your English,” Mark replied. “Otherwise, you might have been able to read my monster card’s effect.”

“W-what?”

“Ocean Dragon Lord’s effect also forces us to send both our hands to the cemetery,” Mark explained, placing the cards in his hand into the graveyard slot.

“No,” Katsuki shouted. “No!” She closed her eyes and grit her teeth, but to no avail. She had to place her hand in the cemetery, as well.

“My turn’s done,” Mark said.

“Fine. My turn. D…”

“Uh-uh-uh.” Mark clicked his tongue and shook his finger again. “I wasn’t talking about Ocean Dragon Lord’s effect earlier. I was talking about Fenrir’s.”

Now Katsuki was in full-on panic mode.

“Of course,” Chiba observed. “When Fenrir destroys a monster, the opponent has to skip their next draw phase. It looks like Walker-san was planning this whole thing.”

“If he was planning to make everyone hate him, he’s doing a good job,” Aino said, noting the crowd was becoming more than a bit bored of Mark’s cheekiness.

“Since there’s nothing you can do, I’ll just move right along with my turn,” Mark said, pulling his card from his deck. “I play the spell card Monster Reborn, and revive your Allure Queen Level 7.”

“You can’t!” Katsuki shouted as the card’s energy shot out from her duel disk. “You CAN’T!”

As the queen materialized next to the Ocean Dragon Lord, Mark shook his head.

***Allure Queen Level 7*** *— LV7 DARK Spellcaster (1500 ATK)*

“I don’t know what you’ve heard about Americans,” he said. “But I’ll tell you one thing. We don’t care for people who look down on us. And in the end, we will come through.”

“Great, Captain America,” Katsuki scoffed. “So you like to humiliate people. What else is new?”

“You don’t get it. What goes around, comes around. And it’s coming around for you. Ocean Dragon Lord! Attack her directly… Destruction Burst!”

Another roll of the eyes from Chiba, Shougo and Aino.

A blast of water struck Katsuki full in the chest, knocking her on her backside. Her lifepoints dropped to 1000.

***Katsuki*** *— 3900 LP — 2900 = 1000 LP*

“Now, Allure Queen, finish her off!” Mark ordered.

Her fiery aura surrounded Katsuki as she struggled to her feet, finishing off the rest of her life points.

***Katsuki** — 1000 LP — 1500 = 0 LP*

The crowd was now raging in a cacophany of cheers and catcalls; the cheers mostly coming from Osiris and Ra, with the boos coming from the Obelisk section.

Aino got up from her chair. “Shiho, you idiot,” she said to herself.

“Thanks for sitting with us, Aino-san,” Shougo said without looking her in the eye.

Aino smiled faintly. “Not all Obelisks are like Katsuki-chan and Toragami-sama. I know she was hard on you last time. I guess you could say I was checking up on you.”

Shougo gasped and looked at Aino in the eye, who quickly looked away. “I have to check on my friend now,” she said. “See you.”

---

“Chancellor Kiyotaki’s decision was to let you on as a member of the Ra Yellow dorm.”

Mark frowned. “Ra? Come on. I’m good enough for Obelisk easily!”

“If it were up to me, you wouldn’t be here at all,” Tenjouin said. “You’re a good duelist, but you have no respect for your opponents.”

“In my country, we have something called the Golden Rule,” Mark shouted. “That girl Katsuki was talking down to me ever since she first saw me. And I happen to not care a great deal when people insult me so, why not just do it right back?”

“That’s not the rule here, Mr. Walker,” Tenjouin replied. “We are to treat our opponents with respect regardless of how they treat us. People of privilege have a hard time learning that, but believe me, they do learn. Ms. Katsuki is just a second year. As a third year student of your school you *should* know better.”

“I can’t believe I’m hearing this!” Mark shouted. “Being friendly with your opponent is one thing, but I refuse to simply sit back and take all the insults your Obelisks hand out to us Americans! I’m here to represent my country and defeat Ms. Toragami.”

“So you can get the respect you deserve, hm?” Tenjouin said with her arms crossed.

“Exactly!”

“I’ve seen that attitude from many duelists. It only leads to self-destruction. Mr. Walker, I acknowledge you have talent. That’s why I’m not putting you in Osiris. But you have to learn some humility.”

Mark grumbled. “And having Obelisks try to push me around is part of that?”

Tenjouin ignored him and started to walk past him. “I know your goal is to have a duel with Hinata Toragami. You’re not ready yet. She would crush you.”

“Well, there’s only one way to see about that, isn’t there?” Walker called after her.

“You’re a Duel Academia student now, Mark Walker. You should be mindful of your teachers.”

She left without another word.

Almost as if on cue, Shougo and Chiba ran in. “So, what did they say?” Chiba asked hurriedly.

“I’m going to be in Ra Yellow, dudes,” he replied.

“And what about the duel with Toragami-san?” Shougo asked.

“‘Denied’,” Mark said gruffly. “Apparently Tenjouin-sensei thinks I need to learn humility.” He shrugged. “Whatever.”

“But it’s good that you’ll be in the school now, right?” Shougo went on.

“Sure is. I can show these guys that Americans aren’t all arrogant idiots. And who knows? I might learn something, too.”

Shougo and Chiba glanced at each other and sighed. “Haven’t learned anything yet, though, have you?” Chiba muttered.

“*Gomen*?” Mark asked, apparently not understanding.

“*Betsuni*,” Chiba responded. “Nothing important.”

“Anyway, I guess I’ll see you guys in class. Wish me luck!”

As Mark ran off, Chiba and Shougo glanced at each other again.

“Things are certainly going to be more interesting around here,” Chiba said with a grimace.

“I suppose,” Shougo replied with an uncomfortable smile.

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster Card, “Ocean Dragon Lord — Neo-Daedalus”***
This card can only be summoned by sacrificing a “Levia-Dragon — Daedalus” on your field. If you have “Umi” as your field spell card, you can sacrifice it and send all cards on the field and in both player’s hands to the cemetery.

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**Shougo:** “Chiba, what are you doing?”
**Chiba:** “I’ve had enough of these bullies pushing you around, Shougo-kun. Someone’s gotta stand up for you!”
**Shougo:** “But if you lose… more importantly, if you get caught…”
**Chiba:** “I haven’t shown you my true face, Shougo,

but you'll see it here. I won't let these people hurt my friend anymore!"
**Aino:** "Chiba-san enters an illegal agreement, an 'Ante Duel' with an opponent who tries to blackmail Shougo-kun. Can his outdated strategies defeat the powerful Gladial Beast deck?"
**Chiba:** "Whose side are you on, anyway, Aino-san?"
**Aino:** "The winner's. Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *'The Friend Shouldering the Darkness! Chiba's Ante Duel'"***
**Shougo:** "This is too terrible. You don't need to do this… Chiba-kun!"

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY MARK WALKER:

**HADES FROG (Treeborn Frog)**
*Effect Monster (L1 Water Aqua, 100/100)*
If this card is in your cemetery during your Standby Phase and your Magic/Trap Card Zone is clear, you may Special Summon it. This effect is negated if you control a "Hades Frog".

**WARRIOR OF ATLANTIS**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Aqua, 1900/1200)*

You can discard this card to the cemetery to add 1 “Legendary City Atlantis” from your Deck to your hand.

**LEGENDARY CITY ATLANTIS (A Legendary Ocean)**
*Field Magic*
This card’s name is treated as “Umi”. Downgrade all Water-attribute monsters in both player’s hands and on the field by 1 Level. Increase the ATK and DEF of all Water-attribute Monsters by 200 points.

**ICE EMPEROR MOEBIUS (Mobius the Frost Monarch)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Water Aqua, 2400/1000)*
When this card is Tribute Summoned, you can destroy up to 2 Magic or Trap cards on the field.

**CALAMITY OF THE WICKED (Malevolent Catastrophe)**
Normal Trap
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Destroy all Magic and Trap cards on the field.

**FENRIR**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Beast, 1400/1200)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned by removing 2

Water-attribute Monsters in your cemetery from play. When this card destroys an opponent's monster, your opponent must skip their next Draw Phase.

**LEVIA-DRAGON — DAEDALUS**
*Effect Monster (L7 Water Sea Serpent, 2600/1500)*
You may send "Umi" on your side of the field to the cemetery to destroy all cards on the field except this card.

**OCEAN DRAGON LORD — NEO-DAEDALUS**
*Effect Monster (L8 Water Sea Serpent, 2900/1600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by sacrificing 1 "Levia-Dragon — Daedalus" on your side of the field. You may send "Umi" on your side of the field to the cemetery to send all cards in both players' hands and on the field to the cemetery except this card.

**RAISE DEAD (Monster Reborn)**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 monster from either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

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CARDS USED BY SHIHO KATSUKI:

**COURT OF THE ALLURE QUEEN**

*Field Magic*

Monster Cards equipped to “Allure Queen” cards are considered owned by the ‘Allure Queen’’s owner for the remainder of the Duel. When you control a face-up “Allure Queen”, you gain the following effects:

— You may remove from play an “Allure Queen” Monster you control to activate its effect to Special Summon a card written on its text.

— “Allure Queen” Monsters gain ATK equal to the original ATK of any Monster Card equipped to it.

— No other Field Magic cards may be activated.

**ALLURE QUEEN LV5**

*Effect Monster (L5 Dark Spellcaster, 1000/1000)*

Once per turn, during your Main Phase, if this card was Special Summoned by the effect of “Allure Queen LV3”, you may select 1 Level 5 or lower monster on your opponent’s side of the field and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time may be equipped usin this effect.) If this card would be destroyed by battle, destroy the equipped monster instead. During your Standby Phase, if this card is equipped by its effect, send it to the cemetery to

Special Summon 1 “Allure Queen LV7” from your hand or Deck.

**TATAMI FLIP (Pulling the Rug)**
*Counter Trap*
Negate the activation and effect of an Effect Monster whose effect activated when a monster was Normal Summoned (even itself), and destroy that Effect Monster.

**ALLURE QUEEN LV7**
*Effect Monster (L7 Dark Spellcaster, 1500/1500)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, if this card was Special Summoned by the effect of “Allure Queen LV5”, you may select 1 monster on your opponent’s side of the field and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time may be equipped usin this effect.) If this card would be destroyed by battle, destroy the equipped monster instead.

**TREASURE FROM HEAVEN (Card of Sanctity)**
*Normal Magic*
Both players draw cards until they have 6 cards in their hand.

**THE EMPTY TOMB**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Monster in your opponent’s cemetery and

Special Summon it to their side of the field. (Your opponent selects the Battle Position.)

**MAGICAL STONE EXCAVATION**

Normal Magic

Discard 2 cards from your hand. Select 1 Magic card in your cemetery and place it in your hand.

**PREMATURE BURIAL**

*Equip Magic*

Pay 800 Life Points. Select 1 Monster in your cemetery, Special Summon it in Attack position, and equip it with this card. When this card is destroyed, destroy the equipped Monster.

# 9. The Friend Shouldering the Darkness!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Nine: "The Friend Shouldering the Darkness! Chiba's Ante Duel"***

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An Osiris Red dorm room.

Katsurou Chiba chuckled as he opened up his pack of cards. “Today certainly was a nice surprise, eh, Shougo-kun?” he asked his friend he looked through his set. “It’s been awhile since I2 released a new booster pack.”

“Mm,” Shougo mumbled, staring out the window.

“What? Didn’t you get one, Shougo-kun? Everyone’s heard about it.”

“Yeah, I got one,” Shougo said.

“And? Did you get anything rare?”

“No, nothing,” Shougo replied.

“Really? That’s too bad,” Chiba said with a grin. “Can’t be lucky all the time, though, right?”

Shougo’s eyes flared up for a moment and then he looked down sadly.

Chiba realized himself and gasped. “Oh… that was insensitive of me, Shougo-kun. I’m very sorry.”

“Don’t worry about it, Chiba-kun,” Shougo said. “Isn’t it about time for us to go to bed?”

“It is late,” Chiba agreed. “I’ll show you my cards tomorrow.”

“Goodnight, Chiba-kun,” Shougo said, and the two got ready to turn in.

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But Chiba didn’t sleep.

He pretended to, but kept an eye open. He saw Shougo wait until he thought Chiba was asleep, and then secretly put on his Osiris Red blazer, place some cards into his pocket and head out the door silently.

Chiba hurriedly put on his own Osiris outfit and sneaked out the door to follow him. He brought his own deck of cards, just in case.

As he followed Shougo, he noticed that he was heading towards the Obelisk Blue dorms. Something in his heart told him that Shougo was in trouble.

*Maybe it’s none of my business,* Chiba thought to himself. *But I have the bad feeling a friend is in danger. I can’t ignore that!*

He ran off into the distance following Shougo.

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The Obelisk Blue duel arena was usually dark at this time of night, but someone had turned on the lights.

Shougo was walking towards three boys wearing Obelisk blazers. One of them, standing at the forefront, appeared to be their leader.

“So… Watanabe-san,” Shougo mumbled. “What is it exactly that you wanted from me?”

“You brought the cards like I asked, right?” the boy in the front asked.

Shougo took out his Dark Armed Dragon, Allure of Darkness, Red-Eyes Black Dragon cards, and the Darklord Zerato he had gotten in his newest booster.

“Just don’t tell people I stole them,” Shougo stammered. “I-I don’t even want them anymore. They’re more trouble than they’re worth.”

“Spare me your excuses, you Osiris rat!” Watanabe yelled. “Just hand them over and get out of my face.”

“Don’t do it, Shougo-kun!” Chiba shouted, having heard and seen everything that was occurring.

“Shougo-kun, what are you doing here?” Chiba said as he ran to take his friend’s arm.

“What does it matter?” Shougo shrugged himself away from Chiba. “Just leave me alone.”

“You can’t let bullies like that get the better of you!” Chiba shouted. “Especially ones that can only threaten to tell lies about you!”

“Oh, look who it is,” Watanabe said with a sneer. “The Osiris punching bag! I’m not surprised that you’d come to this little thief’s defense.”

Chiba’s eyes narrowed. “Watanabe Kentaro,” he said. “I expected better from you… you’ve pushed around Shougo-kun since he got there, but trying to take his cards? That’s a new low.”

“This *kid* needs to learn how this place works,” Watanabe shot back. “He can’t just magically get cards that guys like us have to pay big money to get our hands on! You know he must be cheating somehow!”

“To make accusations without evidence,” Chiba scoffed. “What would your father say?”

“You leave my father out of this!” Watanabe shouted. “I won’t have an Osiris rat like you tell me

what to do!”

“Tell me, Watanabe-san,” Chiba said, adjusting his glasses. “Do you still think you can beat me with that Gladial Beast deck of yours?”

“You bastard!” Watanabe said, holding up his duel disk. “Is a duel what you want?”

“It’s the best way of settling this.” Chiba said. “Whatever you think of our battle record in the past… I won’t let you harass my friend.”

“Well, why don’t we make this interesting, then?”

“An ante duel?”

“Put your cards on the line as well as his,” Watanabe said, crossing his arms. “If I win, you rats will hand over all your rare cards.”

“And if I win? You’ll hand over what your father entrusted to you so easily?”

Watanabe’s two cronies suddenly looked less confident. “Come on, Wata-kun, this is serious!” one of them said. “This is Chiba Katsurou… he’s not someone you can beat just like that.”

“Shut up!” Watanabe said, shoving them aside. “This *is* serious… You know I can walk all over this

guy when I’m playing for real. He’s just an outdated clown… that’s what he is! I’m going to take all of those Mercenary cards from you, you joker!”

“Very well,” Chiba said, adjusting his glasses again with a slight smile on his face. “Those are the terms.”

“Chiba-kun!” Shougo shouted. “What are you doing? Ante duels are illegal! If anyone finds out, they’ll kick you out of the school!”

“They can’t do that without doing the same to Watanabe-san,” Chiba replied, eyes not straying from his opponent. “Besides, I’ve had enough of him threatening you with lies. If this is the only way to reason with him, so be it.”

He took out two decks from his side belt and shuffled them together into one.

“You’re going to see a different ‘me’ here,” he went on. “I’ll show you what the determination of friendship can do.”

Shougo just stepped back from the duel arena, shivering inside himself. *This is bad*, he thought. *What if Chiba loses? I don’t mind losing my own cards but he’ll lose his too!*

“Shougo?” a voice called in the stands… Mark Walker.

Shougo gasped but Mark covered his mouth. “Ssssh,” he whispered. “Don’t get us both caught!”

“Walker-san, what are you doing here?”

“I heard something was going down in the Obelisk student stadium, and I wanted to see it for myself. But… Shougo, were you just going to hand over your cards just like that?”

Shougo sighed and looked down. “They cause me more trouble than they’re worth,” he said. “Besides, I’m thinking of leaving Duel Academia anyway.”

“Stop talking nonsense, Shougo! Look at your friend, he’s putting his own cards on the line for you.”

“I didn’t ask him to!”

“That’s not the important thing here!” Walker said, raising his voice at first but then lowering it. “Isn’t Chiba a friend to you?”

“Yes… well…”

“Watch him play with his whole heart!” Mark replied, cutting him off. “He’s trying to protect you.

Maybe that will inspire you to pick up your cards and try again. Have some courage, you know?”

Shougo touched his fingers together and glanced at the arena. He knew Mark was right. He was being very cowardly, as he usually was, and now Chiba may have to pay a price for his own fear. *Please don’t lose*, he thought silently. *I’ll do my best from now on if you just don’t lose…*

Chiba and Watanabe stared each other down as they activated their duel disks.

“Duel!” they both shouted.

“If you forgive me, I’ll start,” Watanabe said in a mocking tone. ‘Draw!’ He looked at his hand and chuckled. “I’m going to play Gladial Beast Dikaerii in attack mode.”

A purple bull creature in silver battle armor appeared on the field and roared.

***Gladial Beast Dikaerii*** *— LV4 Earth Beast (1600 ATK)*

“That’s a pretty powerful monster,” Shougo observed.

“That’s not all,” Mark added. “Those Gladiator Beasts have an interesting ability. When they attack

or are attacked, you can swap them back into your deck for another one, and that one gains a special ability."

Chiba raised his disk a bit.

"Don't think I'm done," Watanabe said. "Because I have a Gladial Beast on the field, I activate Slave Tiger's special effect, so I can Special Summon it to the field!"

The image of an armored tiger appeared next to Dikaerii.

***Slave Tiger*** *— LV3 Earth Beast (600 ATK)*

Mark's eyes widened. "Slave Ti… he couldn't mean?!"

"What?" Shougo said, pulling Mark back so he wouldn't be seen.

"The Gladiator Beasts are having a test run in America and doing well," Mark said. "But the company that produces Duel Monsters in America also made some exclusive cards… for extra incentive. That card's one of them. It shouldn't be available here."

"Being the son of a wealthy criminal attorney gives a person certain benefits," a female voice said

behind them.

Mark and Shougo both shouted and turned to see Naomi Aino sitting behind them, arms crossed.

“Hey, Ms. Aino,” Mark said, chuckling nervously. “I hope your friend’s not upset about our duel…”

“She’s still upset,” Aino said. “But don’t you worry about that. She’s harmless. Watanabe, on the other hand, plays for keeps.”

“Since when do you run that card, Watanabe-san?” Chiba asked, smiling. “A secret weapon to beat me with, perhaps?”

“Like I need something like that to beat you with,” Watanabe laughed. “I’ll activate Slave Tiger’s other special effect. I’ll sacrifice it and send Dikaerii back to my deck to summon another Gladial Beast. Come out… Gladial Beast Sekutor, defense mode!”

A frog-like creature in blue armor came onto the field and covered its body up with its huge clawed fins.

***Gladial Beast Sekutor*** *— LV4 Wind Reptile (300 DEF)*

Shougo’s confusion was apparent. “Dikaerii was so much stronger than this one.”

“Furthermore, I’ll equip Sekutor with Armaments of the Gladial Beasts — Manica,” Watanabe said, as a metallic black handpiece appeared on Sekutor’s arm. “This prevents my Sekutor from being destroyed as a result of battle. I’ll set one card facedown. Turn end.”

Chiba nodded. “My turn. Draw. And I’ll summon Troop Commander in attack mode.”

A rough looking soldier appeared wielding a sword.

***Troop Commander*** *— LV3 Earth Warrior (1200 ATK)*

“Troop Commander’s special ability now activates, letting me special summon a level 4 or lower monster from my hand,” Chiba went on. “Rogue Mercenaries, assemble!”

A group of armored ruffians appeared beside him, as Chiba continued speaking.

***Rogue Mercenaries*** *— LV4 Earth Warrior (1000 ATK)*

“Now I’ll activate *their* special ability, and sacrifice them to destroy your Sekutor. Ambush Strike!”

The soldiers surrounded Sekutor, ready to attack, but Watanabe just laughed. “Predictable as ever, Chiba! Reverse card open… Chariot of the Gladial Beasts!”

A card appeared on the field depicting a speared chariot. Sekutor raised its arms up and threw the mercenaries off.

Chiba blinked. “What happened?”

“‘Chariot of the Gladial Beasts’ negates the effect of a monster as long as I have a Gladial Beast on the field,” Watanabe explained, adjusting his own glasses slightly. “I came prepared for your Mercenary chicanery, so bring it on. It’s the last time you’ll be able to use it!”

Chiba shrugged. “Turn end,” he simply.

Watanabe scoffed. “That’s it? Sad. My turn, then. Draw! And I’ll switch Sekutor to attack mode.”

Shougo did a double take as the amphibian warrior rose to its feet.

***Gladial Beast Sekutor*** *(400 ATK)*

“What could he possibly hope to do?” he said.

“I guess we’ll see,” Aino replied.

“First, I’ll play the field magic Dungeon of the Gladial Beasts — Colosseum,” Watanabe said as he opened the field magic slot on his duel disk. An arena built of rock, much like the ancient Roman colosseums of old, rose to create the duelists’ field. “Each time a monster is summoned from our decks, my Gladials gain 100 attack and defense points.

“Now… Sekutor! Attack Chiba’s Troop Commander!”

Sekutor rushed forward at Chiba’s monster, who gripped his axe and counterattacked. Watanabe’s life points went down to 3200, but because of Sekutor’s equip magic card, it wasn’t destroyed.

***Watanabe** — 4000 LP — 800 = 3200 LP*

But it was according to Watanabe’s plan. “Because of Slave Tiger’s special effect, Sekutor is treated as though it was summoned by the effect of a Gladial Beast,” he said. “And that gives him his own effect. After he attacks I can Special Summon two other Gladial Beasts from my deck!”

He fanned his deck out, selected two cards from among them and slapped them on his duel disk.

“Come out, Gladial Beast Murmillo, and Gladial Beast Laquer!”

A humanoid fish creature and a fiery tiger, both wearing battle armor, appeared on the field. Their power rose by 200 because of the Colosseum field spell.

***Gladial Beast Murmillo*** *— LV3 Water Fish (800 + 200 = 1000 ATK)*
***Gladial Beast Laquer*** *— LV4 Fire Beast-Warrior (1800 + 200 = 2000 ATK)*

“Murmillo’s special effect activates now,” Watanabe said. “I’ll destroy one face-up monster on the field. Say goodbye to your Troop Commander!”

The fish creature shot a sound wave out which destroyed Chiba’s monster, its axe crashing on the ground.

“At least his Battle Phase is over,” Shougo said, looking at Aino and Mark. “Chiba-kun can still take care of them next turn.”

But Mark and Aino didn’t look relieved. Chiba, too, frowned slightly as he prepared himself for

what was next.

“I don’t need to tell you what’s next, do I?” Watanabe grinned. “You’ve seen it enough times to know. I return Laquer, Murmillo and Sekutor to my deck!” The images of the beasts faded as Watanabe put them into his card set and shuffled it.

“Now… come out, my strongest creature… Gladial Beast Heracleynos!”

The arena rumbled as the image of a humanoid monster wielding a golden shield and axe leaped off of thin air and crashed onto the field. It wore a lion-shaped mask and gave an animal shout as it pointed its axe at Chiba.

***Gladial Beast Heracleynos*** *— LV8 Fire Beast-Warrior (3000 + 300 = 3300 ATK)*

“3300 attack points!” Shougo leaned backwards in his chair.

“That’s not all. Heracleynos has a very bad special effect,” Walker said. “It can negate a magic or trap card if its user discards one card from his hand.”

“Maybe so, but it can’t stop Chiba’s Rogue Mercenaries,” Aino said. “This match could still go

either way. Let's just hope Chiba has some in his hand."

"And the special effect of Armaments of the Gladial Beasts — Manica goes off as well," Watanabe said, placing the card into his hand. "When the equipped monster is returned to the deck, the equip goes back in my hand."

He then looked at his hand and smirked. "That's the end of my turn."

Aino leaned back. "No facedowns?" she said.

"I know Chiba-kun will strike back now," Shougo said, and almost cheered his friend on before remembering they were trying not to call attention to themselves.

"My turn," Chiba said. "Draw. I set three cards facedown and summon Command Knight in defense mode."

***Command Knight*** *— LV4 Fire Warrior (1900 DEF)*

"Turn end."

Shougo facefaulted and then forgot himself. "That's it?! Chiba-kun! Don't lose!"

Watanabe laughed heartily. “Looks like luck isn’t on your side this time, Chiba. So much for ‘determination of friendship’! My turn… draw! I play the magic card Resting Gladial Beast. By returning Gladial Beast Spartacus and Gladial Beast Alexander to my deck, I can draw three new cards.”

He then looked at his hand and sneered. “Too bad, Chiba. Looks like soon you won’t have a purpose in this school! I play Gladial Beast Hoplomus in attack mode!”

An armored rhinoceros-creature appeared on the field next to Heracleynos.

***Gladial Beast Hoplomus*** *— LV4 Earth Rock (700 ATK + 300 = 1000 ATK)*

“So weak,” Aino muttered. “Even with the field magic out, it has only 1000 attack points. It’s much better in defense!”

“Not exactly,” Mark said. “If Hoplomus’ attack goes through, Mr. Watanabe can bring out Gladiator Beast Spartacus. And that will be a lot more troublesome for Mr. Chiba.”

“I activate from my hand, the magic card Smashing Ground,” Watanabe said. “Destroying

your highest defense monster on the field! Say goodbye to your Command Knight!”

A ripple shot through the ground and struck Chiba’s monster. Its image shattered as her scream resounded.

“So much for a defense,” Aino sighed as Shougo whimpered and Mark winced.

Watanabe grinned and thrust his hand out. “Let’s get things started now! Heracleynos… direct attack!”

Heracleynos raised its axe and ran towards Chiba.

“Reverse card open!” Chiba shouted. “Reactive Armor! When a monster of yours declares an attack, I can destroy it!”

Watanabe laughed madly. “Useless, useless!” he shouted. “I’m discarding Manica from my hand to activate Heracleynos’ effect to negate your trap! It’s over, you Osiris rat! Hand over your cards now!”

Chiba frowned deeply as Watanabe’s monster continued its attack.

“This is bad,” Mark said. “If both attacks get through, Chiba’s done for!”

Aino crossed her arms tightly and just watched.

*Please tell me you have something, Chiba-kun…* Shougo thought to himself. *You've got to!*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *The Fusion Monster Card, "Gladial Beast Heracleynos"***
By returning "Gladial Beast Laquer" and two other Gladial Beasts to your deck, Special Summon this card from your Fusion Deck. It can negate the activation of Spells and Traps if you send one card from your hand to the cemetery. If you are able to summon this card, you can later summon it from the cemetery as well.

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**Shougo:** "Chiba-kun! What did you mean when you talked about the 'determination of friendship'?"
**Chiba:** "Don't worry, Shougo-kun. I won't fail here!"
**Aino:** "Chiba refuses to give up in the face of insurmountable odds. Is it really bravery? Or could it be…"
**Mark:** "Yahoo! Chiba had a plan all along! As expected of my future rival!"

**Chiba:** “When did *I* become your rival all of a sudden?!”
**Aino:** “Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *‘The True Form Revealed! Holy Sword — Gear Freed’*.”**
**Chiba:** “When many gather in the name of friendship, miracles definitely happen!”

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY KENTARO WATANABE:

**GLADIAL BEAST DIKAERII (Gladiator Beast Dimacari)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Beast, 1600/1200)*
If this card was Special Summoned by the effect of a “Gladial Beast” monster, it can attack twice during each Battle Phase. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 ‘Gladial Beast’ monster from your Deck other than “Gladial Beast Dikaerii”.

**SLAVE TIGER (Test Tiger)**
*Effect Monster (L3 Earth Beast, 600/300)*
If you control a “Gladial Beast” monster, you can Special Summon this card from your hand. By

Tributing this card and returning 1 ‘Gladial Beast’ monster you conrol to the Deck, Special Summon 1 “Gladial Beast” monster from your Deck, and treat it as though it was Special Summoned by the effect of a “Gladial Beast” monster.

**CHARIOT OF THE GLADIAL BEASTS (Chariot of the Gladiator Beasts)**
*Counter Trap*
Activate only if you control a face-up “Gladial Beast” monster. Negate the activation and effect of an Effect Monster, and destroy it.

**GLADIAL BEAST SEKUTOR (Gladiator Beast Secutor)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Wind Reptile, 400/300)*
If this card was Special Summoned by the effect of a “Gladial Beast” monster, at the end of the Battle Phase you can Special Summon 2 ‘Gladial Beast’ monsters from your Deck other than “Gladial Beast Sekutor”.

**ARMAMENTS OF THE GLADIAL BEASTS — MANICA (Gladiator Beast’s Battle Manica)**
*Equip Magic*
Equip only to a “Gladial Beast” monster. The equipped monster cannot be destroyed as a result of battle. (Damage calculation is applied normally.)

When the equipped monster is returned from your side of the field to the Deck and this card is sent to the Graveyard, return it to your hand.

**DUNGEON OF THE GLADIAL BEASTS — COLOSSEUM (Colosseum — Cage of the Gladiator Beasts)**
*Field Magic*
Place 1 Counter on this card whenever a monster is Special Summoned from either player's Deck. All "Gladial Beast" monsters gain 100 Attack and Defense points for each counter on this card. If this card would be destroyed by a card effect, you can discard 1 "Dungeon of the Gladial Beasts — Colosseum" to negate its destruction.

**GLADIAL BEAST MURMILLO (Gladiator Beast Murmillo)**
*Effect Monster (L3 Water Fish, 800/400)*
If this card was Special Summoned by the effect of a "Gladial Beast" monster, destroy 1 face-up monster. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 'Gladial Beast' monster from your Deck other than "Gladial Beast Murmillo".

**GLADIAL BEAST LAQUER (Gladiator Beast Laquari)**

*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Beast-Warrior, 1800/400)*
If this card was Special Summoned by the effect of a "Gladial Beast" monster, its original Attack points become 2100. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 'Gladial Beast' monster from your Deck other than "Gladial Beast Laquer".

**GLADIAL BEAST HERACLEYNOS (Gladiator Beast Heraklinos)**
*Fusion Monster (L8 Fire Beast-Warrior, 3000/2800)*
"Gladial Beast Laquer" + 2 "Gladial Beast" monsters
This card can only be Special Summoned from your Fusion Deck by retrning the above cards you control to the Deck. (You do not use "Fusion".) You can discard 1 card from your hand to negate the activation of a Spell or Trap Card and destroy it. This effect can be used during either player's turn.

**RESTING GLADIAL BEAST (Gladiator Beast's Respite)**
*Normal Magic*
Return 2 "Gladial Beast" cards from your hand to the Deck to draw 3 cards.

**GLADIAL BEAST SPARTACUS (Gladiator Beast Spartacus)**

*Effect Monster (L5 Earth Dinosaur, 2200/1600)*
This card cannot be Special Summoned except by the effect of "Gladial Beast Hoplomus". When this card is Special Summoned, add 1 'Gladial Beast' equip magic card from your Deck to your hand. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 "Gladial Beast" monster from your Deck other than "Gladial Beast Spartacus".

**GLADIAL BEAST ALEXANDER (Gladiator Beast Alexander)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Light Beast, 2400/600)*
This card cannot be Special Summoned except by the effect of "Gladial Beast Dikaerii". If this card was Special Summoned, it is unaffected by the effects of Magic cards. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 'Gladial Beast' monster from your Deck other than "Gladial Beast Alexander".

**SMASHING GROUND**
*Normal Magic*
Destroy 1 face-up monster your opponent controls with the highest Defense points. (If it is a tie, you get to choose.)

**GLADIAL BEAST HOPLOMUS (Gladiator Beast Hoplomus)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Rock, 700/2100)*
If this card was Special Summoned by the effect of a "Gladial Beast" monster, its original Defense points become 2400. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 'Gladial Beast' monster from your Deck other than "Gladial Beast Hoplomus".

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CARDS USED BY KATSUROU CHIBA:

**TROOP COMMANDER (Marauding Captain)**
*Effect Monster (L3 Earth Warrior, 1200/400)*
While this monster remains face-up on the field, your opponent cannot select another Warrior-type monster on your side of the field as an attack target. When this card is Normal Summoned, you can Special Summon 1 Level 4 or lower monster from your hand.

**ROGUE MERCENARIES (Exiled Force)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1000/1000)*
Sacrifice this card to destroy 1 monster on the field.

**COMMAND KNIGHT**

*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Warrior, 1200/1900)*

While this card is face-up on the field, all Warrior-type Monsters you control gain 400 ATK. When there is 1 Monster card on the field other than this card, your opponent cannot select "Command Knight" as an attack target.

**REACTIVE ARMOR (Sakuretsu Armor)**

*Normal Trap*

Activate only when the opponent's monster declares an attack. Destroy the attacking monster.

# 10. The True Form Revealed!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 —**
***Turn Ten: "The True Form Revealed! Holy Sword — Gear Freed"***

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Chiba and Watanabe were continuing their duel. It was Watanabe's turn.

“I activate from my hand, the magic card Smashing Ground,” Watanabe said. “Destroying your highest defense monster on the field! Say goodbye to your Command Knight!”

A ripple shot through the ground and struck Chiba’s monster. Its image shattered as her scream resounded.

“So much for a defense,” Aino sighed as Shougo whimpered and Mark winced.

Watanabe grinned and thrust his hand out. “Let’s get things started now! Heracleynos… direct attack!”

Heracleynos raised its axe and ran towards Chiba.

“Reverse card open!” Chiba shouted. “Reactive Armor! When a monster of yours declares an attack, I can destroy it!”

Watanabe laughed madly. “Useless, useless!” he shouted. “I’m discarding Manica from my hand to activate Heracleynos’ effect to negate your trap! It’s over, you Osiris rat! Hand over your cards now!”

Chiba frowned deeply as Watanabe’s monster continued its attack.

“This is bad,” Mark said. “If both attacks get through, Chiba’s done for!”

But Chiba just gave a little smile. “Predictable as ever, Watanabe-san,” he said. “Reverse card open… God’s Wrath! I’ll send my equip card Explosion to the cemetery… and in exchange, your prize monster’s effect is negated and it’s destroyed!”

A lightning bolt cut across the field striking Heracleynos across the chest.

“Why didn’t Watanabe-san negate it?” Shougo asked, even though he was happy that the monster was gone.

“God’s Wrath is a counter trap,” Aino replied. “Heracleynos can’t negate it.”

“The whole thing was a set-up! Good job, Katsurou!” Mark shouted in English.

“You bastard!” Watanabe shouted. “How dare you do that? Hoplomus will get you back for that in spades! Hoplomus… attack Chiba directly!”

The rhinoceros charged Chiba head-on. Chiba reared back slightly as his life points lowered to 3000.

“Don’t even start thinking about striking back! Now that my Battle Phase is over, I’ll activate the Gladial Beast’s relay effect,” Watanabe said. “By returning Hoplomus to my deck… I can Special Summon Gladial Beast Spartacus!”

Hoplomus’ image was replaced by a dinosaur weilding an axe and similar battle armor. Its battle power was 2200, raised to 2600 by the Colosseum field spell.

***Gladial Beast Spartacus*** *— LV5 Earth Dinosaur (2200 ATK + 400 = 2600 ATK)*

“Wait a minute,” Shougo said. “I thought Watanabe-san sent Spartacus to the cemetery with that magic card earlier.”

“No, he didn’t,” Aino pointed out. “He returned it to his deck. Gladial Beast support spells do that. That’s why the decks are so powerful.”

“That almost doesn’t seem fair.” Shougo frowned.

“Well, Gladiator Beasts seem to be popular lately in tournaments,” Mark said. “I still like my Monarchs better, though.”

Aino rolled her eyes. “You would.”

“Spartacus has a special effect when he’s Special Summoned too,” he said. “Just in case you were thinking of more Rogue Mercenaries foolishness, I’ll take an equip magic from my deck and place it on Spartacus — Armaments of the Gladial Beasts — Demon’s Shield!”

A firey shield that looked to be made of bone appeared on the field and was picked up by Spartacus.

“Demon’s Shield will protect my monster from being destroyed, whether in battle or a card effect,” Watanabe said. “So do what you can! Just because you destroyed Heracleynos doesn’t mean this battle is won! Turn end.”

“My turn,” Chiba said. ‘Draw!’ He drew a solitary card into his empty hand. “And afterwards, I’ll flip my reverse card: Reckless Greed! In exchange for drawing two cards now, I must skip my next two draw phases.”

“He’s digging for Rogue Mercenaries,” Mark muttered.

“I’m not so sure,” Aino said. “That card won’t help him now. Even if he gets it, he can’t destroy Spartacus.”

“I’ll set two cards facedown and then play the magic card Life Slashing Treasure,” Chiba said, showing the card, which depicted a cardplayer’s hand held in a guillotine, to his opponent. “I’ll draw until my hand has five cards. In five turns, I must discard any cards I have to the cemetery. But for now…”

He filled his hand, which had been empty save the Life Slashing Treasure card, with five cards.

“Before I end my turn, I’ll summon Wilderness Warrior Lady in defense mode,” Chiba said, placing the card on his disk. A blonde woman wearing a green denim Old Western suit and bearing a sword appeared on the field and covered her body in a defensive posture.

***Wilderness Warrior Lady*** *— LV4 Earth Warrior (1200 DEF)*

“Turn end.”

“That’s an obvious ploy,” Mark said. “If Mr. Watanabe destroys that monster, Mr. Chiba gets an Exiled Force… um, Rogue Mercenaries.”

“Watanabe-san will just destroy it by bringing in Murmillo and using his effect again,” Shougo frowned. “I hope Chiba-kun’s facedowns will help.”

Aino bit her lip slightly. “They’ll have to do… because of Reckless Greed, Chiba-san can’t draw anything for two more turns. He seems to have banked it all on his hand.”

“My turn… draw!” Watanabe laughed again. “Did you think you’d seen the last of Heracleynos, Chiba? I just wanted you to squirm… look what I have in my hand! I play the magic card Raise Dead!”

He practically shoved the card into his duel disk.

“I can summon any monster I want from the cemetery to the field… and I pick Heracleynos! With three cards in my hand, your facedowns are just taking up space! It’s over!”

The field rumbled, but no monster came out.

“What’s going on?” Watanabe then noticed a black bird perched on his duel disk. “Get off!” he grumbled, shaking his arm. The bird flew away, holding Watanabe’s Gladial Beast Heracleynos card.

“It’s a pity, Watanabe-san,” Chiba said. “I discard my D.D. Crow to the cemetery, to remove your Heracleynos from play.”

“That’s cheating!” Watanabe shouted. “You’ve never used that card before!”

“Special situations call for special measures,” Chiba replied. “You threatening my friend would be a special situation. I can’t forgive that, Watanabe-san. I’m done playing around with you like I usually do. I aim to win this time.”

“Well, you won’t do that with the strategy you’re employing. That’s the most obvious strategy I’ve seen, but I’ll bite! Spartacus, attack Chiba’s Wilderness Warrior Lady!”

Chiba’s monster defended herself as best she could, but Spartacus’ axe slash went through and she was destroyed.

“Wilderness Warrior Lady’s effect activates when she’s destroyed,” Chiba said after her image faded from the field. “It allows me to summon an Earth-attribute Warrior with 1500 attack points or less. And I’ll summon another Wilderness Lady Warrior from my deck.”

***Wilderness Warrior Lady*** *(1100 ATK)*

Everyone watching was taken aback by this move.

“What are you thinking, Chiba?” Watanabe said. “Are you mocking me?”

“Make your next play,” Chiba said, not smiling at all this time.

“Don’t fool around with me! My Gladial Beasts get stronger either way, since you summoned from your deck,” Watanabe shouted, losing his temper. “And after I’m done battling, I’ll return Spartacus to my deck, to Special Summon a Gladial Beast from my deck!”

*You thought you could trick me into getting out Murmillo and trying to destroy your Warrior Lady,* Watanabe thought to himself. *One of your facedowns is Battle Zone, which means if I bring out Murmillo, you’ll be able to activate your Warrior Lady’s effect again to bring out Rogue Mercenaries. Well, I see through you, Chiba!*

“I’ll bring out Gladial Beast Laquer!”

The firey tiger beast from before appeared on the field, roaring again in bloodlust.

***Gladial Beast Laquer*** *(2100 ATK + 600 = 2700 ATK)*

“Because it was summoned by a Gladial Beast, Laquer’s original attack points become 2100,” Watanabe said. “And with six counters on my Colosseum, its attack power grows to 2700. So even if you try suiciding your Warrior Lady to get Rogue Mercenaries, you’ll still be defeated as a result! Face it, Chiba — I’m a superior duelist to you in every way!”

Chiba’s face was emotionless.

“And just to be sure, since I returned Spartacus to my deck, I get his Demon Shield equip spell back, which I’ll place on Laquer,” Watanabe said as the tiger picked up the bone shield. “And after setting one card facedown, I’ll end my turn. Don’t forget, Chiba… you can’t draw because of Reckless Greed! What will you do now?”

“It’s a pity, Watanabe-san,” Chiba said. “You’ve fallen into my trap completely. Reverse card open: Chireijutsu ‘Kurogane’! By tributing one Earth monster, I can Special Summon one level 4 or lower Earth monster from my cemetery!”

“Yes!” Shougo shouted.

“No!” Watanabe groaned.

“I release Wilderness Warrior Lady to summon Rogue Mercenaries!” Chiba said as the woman bowed her hat and vanished to be replaced by the sinister-looking soldiers.

***Rogue Mercenaries*** *(1000 ATK)*

“Destroy Watanabe-san’s Laquer with Ambush Strike!”

The soldiers surrounded the tiger monster, but it struck them away with its shield, which shattered.

Watanabe harrumphed. “Nice try, Chiba, but my Demon Shield takes the hit for Laquer.”

“I normal summon Iron Knight Gear Freed,” Chiba went on. A stark, gray-armored soldier hit the field, raising its sword.

***Iron Knight Gear Freed*** *— LV4 Earth Warrior (1800 ATK)*

“Is that your big move?” Watanabe asked. “1800 attack points! That won’t even scratch my Gladial Beast Laquer!”

Chiba adjusted his glasses and bowed his head. “Gear Freed has hidden abilities,” he said. “Abilities which he hides because they’ll decimate all his foes if he dared to reveal them. Abilities… which I’ll

reveal now! This is for my friend Shougo-kun! I play the magic card… Restraint Removal!”

Another rumble hit the arena as Gear Freed’s armor began to crack. Then a bright light flooded everyone’s field of vision as the armor came off, revealing Gear Freed’s true form completely.

Chiba now smiled fully. “Now, come out and show yourself… Holy Sword — Gear Freed, in attack position!”

***Holy Sword — Gear Freed*** *— LV7 Light Warrior (2600 ATK)*

Watanabe narrowed his eyes and stared at the monster, and yet again laughed mockingly. “You scared me there for a second, Chiba-*kun*,” he sneered. “2600 attack points? Even before you summoned it, it wasn’t strong enough, but my Laquer gets stronger by 100 since you summoned that card from your deck!”

“I reveal my other facedown card — the instant magic card, Weapon Regeneration,” Chiba said. “This allows me to take an equip card from either player’s cemetery and equip it to a monster on the field.”

“And which equip card would that be?” Watanabe said, chuckling. “You haven’t played one throughout th—” He then choked.

*When he played God’s Wrath, he discarded Explosion… was he planning this whole thing? Impossible!*

“I see you figured it out,” Chiba said. “The Explosion equip card I used for God’s Wrath… I’m bringing it back.”

The card’s image appeared and charged Gear Freed with energy.

“When my life points are lower than my opponent’s, the attack power of the monster equipped with this card doubles,” Chiba said as Gear Freed’s strength rose…

“5200!?” Mark said. “That’s insane!”

“So what?” Watanabe cried. “Even if you destroy my Laquer, you won’t finish me!”

“Gear Freed’s special ability activates,” Chiba went on, ignoring Watanabe’s bluster. “Unlike his previous form, which cannot be equipped with any card, Holy Sword Gear Freed instantly destroys a

monster when he's equipped. Gear Freed! Shatter his Gladial Beast!"

Chiba's monster struck his sword on the ground and the Colosseum field shook. Watanabe's Gladial Beast was hit full on with Gear Freed's power and was destroyed.

"Damn it!" Watanabe said, but he hid a smirk. *Does he really think I wasn't prepared for this?* he thought to himself. *My facedown card is Magic Cylinder. If he attacks, he'll take all the damage he means to give to me! He's such a one-dimensional idiot!*

"Time to finish this match," Chiba said. "Holy Sword Gear Freed… attack with Unsealed Slash!"

"This match is finished!" Watanabe retorted, unable to restrain his smirk any longer. "Reverse card open… Magic Cylinder! Your attack is negated and the damage is sent back to you! Chiba, you idiot! So mu…"

An unseen energy cut Watanabe's card image in half.

"Predictable as always, Watanabe-san," Chiba said, his demeanor deadly serious as he revealed the final card from his card. "I respond with the instant

magic Snowfall Sword. When I have a Warrior-type Monster and declare an attack, this card negates any magic and trap cards you'd play. So I'm afraid… you lose."

The power of Gear Freed's sword blew Watanabe away as his Life Points finally dropped to zero.

"Chiba-kun!" Shougo shouted and ran out from the bleachers.

"So you won for your rat friend," Watanabe muttered and threw some cards on the ground. "Here, take my cards."

"I don't want your cards," Chiba replied. "I played this duel so you'd stop harassing my friend."

"Well, fat chance! Do you think I'd just overlook that kid? I'm gonna make sure that the whole campus knows…"

"Knows what exactly?"

Asuka Tenjouin was standing on the arena with her arms crossed.

"Tenjouin-sensei!" Shougo said.

"How long have you been here?" Aino asked.

“Long enough,” Tenjouin said, walking towards the two duelists. “Since this is an ante duel, I could have you both expelled, but it would cause a lot of trouble in my department from Watanabe-kun’s father.”

As Watanabe’s friends tried to help him up, Watanabe muttered under his breath.

Tenjouin’s brow narrowed. “Still, as an attorney, your father should appreciate what would happen to someone who made libelous accusations without any proof, am I right, Watanabe-kun?”

“Hmph!” Watanabe snorted.

“You guys need to leave here,” Tenjouin said. “I can overlook what’s happening and make sure the data is reset, but if security comes around I can’t act like I don’t know. Get out of here!”

Watanabe and his friends trotted off.

Tenjouin turned towards the others. “Aino-san, Mr. Walker, Aoyama-kun… you didn’t see anything, did you?”

“No, not me,” Mark said.

Aino just shook her head.

The two turned to Shougo, but he had gone.

“Shougo-kun?” Chiba was surprised along with the rest of them.

Tenjouin clicked her tongue. “Where do you suppose he went?”

“Probably back to the dorms,” Chiba replied. “I wish he hadn’t gone by himself, though…”

“You all go along now,” Tenjouin said as she walked off the platform. “I’ll take care of things here.”

As the duelists left, Tenjouin thought back on past events and nodded her head slightly. *This will be an interesting year if anything,* she sighed.

---

“So does that mean we’re gonna lay off that Aoyama guy?”

“Hell no!” Watanabe frowned and clenched his fist hard. “We just have to be more discreet about it. There’s no way I’m letting a rat like that run around like he’s welcome here…”

“Were you calling someone a rat?” a distant voice said.

The three students turned to where the voice came from. It was too shrouded in darkness to see clearly. The voice sounded male though.

“Who are you?” one of Watanabe’s friends shouted. “Come out!”

“You want answers? Then duel,” the voice responded simply and the sound of a duel disk activating was heard.

“What… now? I just finished one!” Watanabe said.

“Just duel,” the voice repeated.

Watanabe scoffed again. “Tch… whatever. I need a win today anyway!”

Five minutes later, a flash of light and a shout resounded, but being the time it was, anyone who might have noticed was asleep.

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The next morning, Tenjouin was getting a start to her class when she saw noticeably empty seats.

Tenjouin checked her roll sheet and noticed Watanabe, Ohkawa and Ideki, the three students who had been in the Obelisk arena along with Shougo and his friends, were absent. “Where are Watanabe and his friends?” she asked her assistant.

“Oh, I just heard about it this morning,” the assistant replies. “He quit Duel Academia, so did his friends. They said they no longer had an interest in dueling.”

“So suddenly? I never noticed any loss of interest.”

“Me neither. It’s strange, but there’s nothing that can be done. We can’t keep them against their will.”

“Of course not.”

Tenjouin’s eyes glanced to Shougo, who had left before all his friends. He was looking down at the ground in his usual morose look.

Her expression shifted from one of suspicion to one of concern.

*The only reason to suspect him is that he left early. He has no kind of resolve to do anything like I’d be thinking. But then what is this dreadful feeling…?*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster, "Holy Sword — Gear Freed"***
This card can only be summond by sacrificing an "Iron Knight — Gear Freed" with the effect of the magic card "Restraint Removal". When you activate an equip magic card and equip it to this monster, he automatically destroys one monster on the field.

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**Aino**: "Industrial Illusions produces new cards every month, but the mysterious D-Heroes that Edo Phoenix have never been available to the general public… until now."
**Chiba:** "It's amazing and incredible! All the new students are up in arms! A structure deck with the Destiny Heroes!"
**Shougo:** "But… the person they pick to showcase the deck wants to duel me for some reason. Why?"
**Aino:** "An Obelisk Blue student who bears a grudge against Shougo-kun challenges him to an exhibition… but then it becomes rapidly clear that his only goal is revenge."
**Shougo:** "I can't take this… I can't take anymore people looking down on me!"
**Chiba:** "Hang in there, Shougo-kun!"

**Aino:** "Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *'Destiny Rewritten! Dark Armed Dragon vs. D-HERO Deck'*.**"
**Shougo:** "This is the duel that determines destiny…"

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## SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION

CARDS USED BY KENTARO WATANABE:

**GLADIAL BEAST HERACLEYNOS (Gladiator Beast Heraklinos)**
*Fusion Monster (L8 Fire Beast-Warrior, 3000/2800)*
"Gladial Beast Laquer" + 2 "Gladial Beast" monsters
This card can only be Special Summoned from your Fusion Deck by retrning the above cards you control to the Deck. (You do not use "Fusion".) You can discard 1 card from your hand to negate the activation of a Spell or Trap Card and destroy it. This effect can be used during either player's turn.

**SMASHING GROUND**
*Normal Magic*
Destroy 1 face-up monster your opponent controls with the highest Defense points. (If it is a tie, you get to choose.)

**ARMAMENTS OF THE GLADIAL BEASTS — MANICA (Gladiator Beast's Battle Manica)**
*Equip Magic*
Equip only to a "Gladial Beast" monster. The equipped monster cannot be destroyed as a result of battle. (Damage calculation is applied normally.) When the equipped monster is returned from your side of the field to the Deck and this card is sent to the Graveyard, return it to your hand.

**GLADIAL BEAST HOPLOMUS (Gladiator Beast Hoplomus)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Rock, 700/2100)*
If this card was Special Summoned by the effect of a "Gladial Beast" monster, its original Defense points become 2400. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 'Gladial Beast' monster from your Deck other than "Gladial Beast Hoplomus".

**GLADIAL BEAST SPARTACUS (Gladiator Beast Spartacus)**
*Effect Monster (L5 Earth Dinosaur, 2200/1600)*
This card cannot be Special Summoned except by the effect of "Gladial Beast Hoplomus". When this card is Special Summoned, add 1 'Gladial Beast' equip magic card from your Deck to your hand. If

this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the Deck to Special Summon 1 “Gladial Beast” monster from your Deck other than “Gladial Beast Spartacus”.

**ARMAMENTS OF THE GLADIAL BEASTS — DEMON SHIELD (Gladiator Beast’s Battle Archfiend Shield)**

*Equip Magic*

Equip only to “Gladial Beast” monster. If the equipped monster would be destroyed, this card is destroyed instead. When the equipped monster is returned from your side of the field to the Deck and this card is sent to the cemetery, return this card to your hand.

**RAISE DEAD (Monster Reborn)**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 Monster in either player’s cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

**GLADIAL BEAST LAQUER (Gladiator Beast Laquari)**

*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Beast-Warrior, 1800/400)*

If this card was Special Summoned by the effect of a “Gladial Beast” monster, its original Attack points become 2100. If this card attacked or was attacked, at the end of the Battle Phase you can return it to the

Deck to Special Summon 1 ‘Gladial Beast’ monster from your Deck other than “Gladial Beast Laquer”.

**MAGIC CYLINDER**
*Normal Trap*
Negate 1 attack from an opponent’s attacking monster and inflict damage to that player equal to the attacking monster’s Attack points.

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CARDS USED BY KATSUROU CHIBA:
**REACTIVE ARMOR (Sakuretsu Armor)**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when the opponent’s monster declares an attack. Destroy the attacking monster.

**GOD’S WRATH (Divine Wrath)**
*Counter Trap*
Discard 1 card from your hand. Negate the activation and the effect of an Effect Monster and destroy it.

**EXPLOSION (Megamorph)**
*Equip Magic*
While your Life Points are lower than your opponent’s, the original Attack points of the equipped monster is doubled. While your Life

Points are higher, the original Attack points of the equipped monster is halved.

**RECKLESS GREED**

*Normal Trap*

Draw 2 cards from your deck. Skip your next 2 Draw Phases.

**LIFE SLASHING TREASURE (Card of Demise)**

*Normal Magic*

Draw until your hand contains 5 cards. On your fifth Standby Phase after the activation of this card, discard all cards in your hand into the cemetery.

**WILDERNESS WARRIOR LADY (Warrior Lady of the Wasteland)**

*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1100/1200)*

When this card is destroyed as a result of battle and sent to the cemetery, you can Special Summon 1 Earth-attribute Warrior-type monster with Attack points of 1500 or lower in face-up Attack position from your Deck to your side of the field. Then, shuffle your Deck.

**D.D. CROW**

*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Winged-Beast, 100/100)*

During either player's turn, you can discard this card

to the cemetery to remove 1 card in your opponent's cemetery from play.

**CHIREIJUTSU "KUROGANE" (Spiritual Earth Art — Kurogane)**
*Normal Trap*
Sacrifice 1 Earth-attribute monster on your side of the field. Special Summon 1 Level 4 or lower Earth-attribte monster from your cemetery, except the sacrificed monster.

**ROGUE MERCENARIES (Exiled Force)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1000/1000)*
Sacrifice this card to destroy 1 monster on the field.

**IRON KNIGHT GEAR FREED (Gearfried the Iron Knight)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1800/1600)*
When an Equip Card is equipped to this card, destroy the Equip Card.

**RESTRAINT REMOVAL (Remove Restraint)**
*Normal Magic*
Sacrifice 1 "Iron Knight Gear Freed". Special Summon 1 "Holy Sword Gear Freed" from your hand or Deck.

**HOLY SWORD — GEAR FREED (Gearfried the Swordmaster)**

*Effect Monster (L7 Earth Warrior, 2600/2200)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by the effect of “Restraint Removal”. When this card is equipped with an Equip Card, destroy 1 monster on your opponent’s side of the field.

**WEAPON REGENERATION**
*Normal Magic*
Take 1 Equip Magic Card from either player’s cemetery and equip it to an appropriate monster on the field.

**SNOWFALL SWORD**
*Instant Magic*
Activate only when a Warrior-Type monster you control declares an attack and your opponent activates a Spell or Trap card. Negate the effect of that card and destroy it.

# 11. Destiny Rewritten!

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Eleven: "Destiny Rewritten! Dark Armed Dragon vs. D-HERO Deck"***

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The Duel Academia card shop was bustling with students as armored guards arrived with the newest cards to be released by Industrial Illusions. "Is it

true?” some whispered to themselves. “Have they finally released the D-HEROs?”

“It’s true,” one of the guards said. “The Destiny Heroes have been released to public use, but they won’t be available until tomorrow. However, you can look forward to an exhibition duel using the structure deck tonight at the Obelisk arena!”

The students went up in cheers and excitement.

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“But who will be the student to use the deck?” Ra Yellow professor Abe asked.

“That’s an easy question to answer,” Tenjouin replied. “Toragami Hinata is the most qualified duelist in our school.”

“Toragami-san uses Lightlords, though,” Osiris Red professor Matsutani reminded them. “She wouldn’t be willing to play with another deck.”

“And besides, she is away on family business,” Chancellor Kiyotaki said. “We will have to choose another.”

At that moment, the door opened and a student in an Obelisk Blue blazer arrived.

“My name’s Horiuchi Daisuke,” he said. “And I’ll be the one to use that deck. My family’s influence was responsible for getting the deck available in Duel Academia, and they’ve requested me to be their representative.”

“But Horiuchi-kun’s grades aren’t the best…” Tenjouin began.

“It is true, though, that Horiuchi’s family made this possible,” Kiyotaki said. “And he is not an incompetent duelist.”

“I have one request, though,” Horiuchi said. “There is one particular opponent that I want to face. And his name is…”

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Shougo was looking out the window when Chiba burst into the room. “Shougo-kun!” he shouted. “Why aren’t you at the card shop? They’ve released it — the D-HERO Structure!”

“D-HERO?” Shougo asked.

“That’s right,” Chiba replied. “They’ve just released a new structure deck, featuring the legendary Destiny Heroes that the pro duelist Edo Phoenix uses. I want to pick one up myself!”

“Are they really that powerful?”

“Well, Edo Phoenix-san’s record speaks for itself,” Chiba replied. “In his day he was the top duelist in the world — undefeated! I want to see how he did it for myself.”

Shougo glanced at his deck. *I have a bad feeling for some reason*, he thought to himself. *What is this?*

“Shougo-kun?” Chiba asked. “What is it?”

At that moment, the door opened and Mark Walker went in.

“Shougo! Katsurou! Have you heard?” Mark shouted.

“What?” Chiba asked. “What’s going on?”

“Come to the card shop,” Mark replied. “And hurry!”

---

When Shougo, Chiba and Mark arrived, the students were expecting them. “There he is!” one shouted. “Aoyama Shougo!”

“Wh… what?” Shougo asked, nervous in his heart.

“They’re having an exhibition duel tonight at the Obelisk Blue duel arena,” one of the students said. “With the new structure deck?”

“The Deck?”

“That’s right! And the guy using the deck… he wants to duel Aoyama-kun!”

“An Osiris Red student? But why?”

“Haven’t you heard… he has a talent for getting rare cards. He’s not bad.”

“Then why is he in Osiris?”

Shougo choked a bit and stepped back. “Me? Why?”

“Never mind that,” a worker at the card shop said. “Are you going to accept the challenge?”

“There’s no question of that,” Chiba said. “He’s going to accept, aren’t you, Shougo-kun?”

Shougo’s eyes narrowed and he touched his chest, feeling somewhat ill.

“What is it? Are you scared?” a student taunted.

The other students joined in, laughing.

“Enough,” Shougo muttered.

Chiba and Mark blinked in surprise.

“That’s enough,” Shougo said. “Whoever this guy is — I’ll duel him. I’ve had enough of everyone making fun of me!”

“Maybe you don’t understand your situation,” a Ra Yellow student said. “The duelist is Horiuchi Daisuke. You’re not on his level! The fact that you’re in Osiris Red is proof enough of that!”

“That’s true!” another duelist shouted. “You’ll just embarass yourself if you…”

“Didn’t I say enough is enough?” Shougo shouted. “Don’t act like just because I’m in Osiris Red, you know who I am! You know nothing about me! Tell that… Horiuchi guy I accept his challenge.”

He then turned to walk out of the card shop.

“Where are you going?” Mark said.

“There’s something I have to do,” Shougo muttered, before turning towards Chiba and Mark. “I’m thankful that at least a few people believe in me.”

Chiba smiled and nodded.

---

Tenjouin was at the library working on her next class lecture when she saw an interesting sight — Shougo at the library computer desk.

“Aoyama-kun… what are you doing?” she asked. “Research for a paper?”

“Research for my duel, Tenjouin-sensei,” Shougo replied, eyes not leaving the screen. “I need to know what I’m up against.”

Tenjouin gasped. “You mean you accepted that challenge against Horiuchi-kun?”

“I know you’re my teacher, but please don’t try to stop me, Tenjouin-sensei,” Shougo said. “I want to prove my worth as a duelist, even if I can’t win. But I aim to try.”

Tenjouin glanced at the computer screen, and it contained information about Edo Phoenix’s dueling career.

*You’re an interesting person, Aoyama-kun,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *But I hope you really*

*can handle the pressure of dueling in front of the whole school.*

Shougo continued to read over the computer screen as Tenjouin left. *Edo Phoenix was such an awesome guy,* he thought. *And those Destiny Heroes… they have interesting abilities. I wouldn't think someone could win with just those alone, but he did it…*

He glanced at his deck.

*I may not be able to win unless I'm ready.*

---

The cheers of the crowd were overwhelming as the time for dueling approached.

Within a sealed chamber that was within the boundaries of the duel arena, the three lead professors and Chancellor Kiyotaki watched the duel.

"Kiyotaki-kouchou, I have to renew my protest," Tenjouin said. "This boy isn't ready for a duel like this one!"

"Tenjouin-san, I understand your feelings, but it's duels like this that a Duel Academia student must be

prepared for… whether he's an Osiris or an Obelisk," Kiyotaki replied.

"This has nothing to do with him being an Osiris!" Tenjouin shouted. "I've dueled him before. He's a very borderline personality. He may…"

"May what… Tenjouin-san?" Kiyotaki said, turning towards Tenjouin with a curious look on his face.

Tenjouin was taken aback by his earnest look. "N… nothing," Tenjouin said.

*What was that look?* she thought. *Why am I suddenly afraid?*

A bell rang announcing that the duel was ready to begin. "Forgive me for keeping you waiting," the announcer shouted. "But the moment has arrived! The exhibition duel is about to begin!"

Cheers went up in the audience.

"But first, announcing his opponent… a first year Osiris Red student from Domino City… Aoyama Shougo!"

Confused mumbles turned into quiet catcalls as Shougo entered the stadium.

“GO SHOUGO!” Mark shouted in English, trying to drown out the suspicious whispers. “YOU CAN DO IT!”

“And his opponent, who will be the first duelist other than Edo Phoenix to use D-HERO’s, showing off the power of the Destiny Heroes… Obelisk Blue’s Horiuchi DAISUKEEE!”

Horiuchi approached the field, and cheers once again erupted.

“Hello, Duel Academia!” he shouted. “You know why I’m here. My family helped bring about the events that allowed you all to use D-HEROs starting tomorrow! I think I’ll demonstrate their abilities effectively!”

He then turned to Shougo and scowled.

“But I know what you’re all thinking. Why pick a pitiful Osiris Red student as my opponent? I’ll tell you why — this boy is nothing more than a bully and a thief! He stole all his powerful cards, and he bullied my friend Watanabe Kentaro into leaving Duel Academia!”

“What?” everyone shouted.

“That’s right! Before Watanabe-kun left, he spoke to me — and he said that Aoyama had challenged him to a duel! And that he had destroyed Watanabe-kun so badly, he didn’t see a point in going on. Well, we’ll see about that! You’re not the only one who can win with rare cards. I’m going to take the Phoenix deck and crush you with the newly released D-HEROs.”

“So you’re going to spread lies about me? That’s fine,” Shougo said, raising his duel disk. “I’ve never dueled Watanabe-san, but I’ll defeat you here in front of everyone.”

“We’ll see about that,” Horiuchi muttered, turning on his duel disk as well.

“Duel!” they both shouted.

“I’ll start things off,” Horiuchi said, grinning boldly as he put his hand to his deck. “Draw!”

He stared at his card and then chuckled. “This duel’s as good as done, Aoyama. I activate the magic card ‘Reasoning’!”

Shougo took a step back. “Reasoning?”

“You declare a level of Monster and I pick up cards from the top of my deck and send them to the

cemetery, until I get a monster that can be normal summoned. If its level is the same as the one you say, it goes to my cemetery; otherwise, it gets special summoned. So, hurry and pick a number!”

Shougo closed his eyes and thought for a moment. “I’ll pick four,” he announced after a brief pause.

“So be it,” Horiuchi said as his Duel Disk automatically counted off cards. It discarded five cards before a monster was found. ‘D-HERO Diabolicguy,’ Horiuchi said smugly as he held up the card. “So sorry, but that’s a level six. I special summon him to the field!”

A creature that looked like a stereotypical devil, with bull legs and a long tail, appeared on the field.

***D-HERO Diabolicguy*** *— LV6 Dark Warrior (800 DEF)*

Horiuchi chuckled again disparagingly. “Diabolicguy looks weak, but he’s actually just what I need right now. I sacrifice him to activate the magic card ‘Monster Gate’. Like ‘Reasoning’, I’ll pick up cards until I get a card that can be normal summoned, but there’s nothing you can do to stop it this time!”

The Duel Disk then spit out three cards until a monster card was reached.

Horiuchi took the card out and grinned again. “I special summon D-HERO Diamondguy!”

The audience gasped, impressed with the legendary Destiny Hero that had been seen by so very few before.

***D-HERO Diamondguy*** *— LV4 Dark Warrior (1400 ATK)*

“And now to activate the effect of D-HERO Diamondguy — I pick up the top card of my deck, and if it’s a regular magic card, I send it to the graveyard and activate its effect when I begin my next turn. Otherwise, it goes to the bottom of my deck.”

He picked up a card, and with a malicious grin showed it to his opponent. “The card I picked up is ‘Destiny Draw’, so it goes to my cemetery! And next turn, I get to pick up two extra cards!”

“But wouldn’t he have to discard a from his hand?” Mark asked Chiba.

“D-HERO Diamondguy lets him activate a card’s effect without having to pay its costs,” Chiba said.

“Worse yet, there’s nothing Shougo-kun can do to stop it.”

“Next up, Diabolicguy’s special effect,” Horiuchi announced. “By removing the Diabolicguy in my cemetery from play, I can bring out another Diabolicguy from my deck.

***D-HERO Diabolicguy*** *(800 DEF)*

“Now for my normal summon, I’ll bring to the field D-HERO Diskguy,” Horiuchi announced as a third Destiny Hero hit the field.

***D-HERO Diskguy*** *— LV1 Dark Warrior (300 ATK)*

“But they won’t be staying long… because I’m going to sacrifice all three to summon the strongest Destiny Hero of them all — D-HERO Dogmaguy in attack mode!”

The audience gasped in wonder as the giant Destiny Hero appeared on the field — with a horned helmet, giant bat wings and a menacing blade on its right arm, it was a sight to behold. And at 3400 attack points, it would be difficult to deal with.

***D-HERO Dogmaguy*** *— LV8 Dark Warrior (3400 ATK)*

Horiuchi gave a devilish smile as he placed a card into his duel disk. “I’ll set one card facedown. Turn end!”

Shougo frowned. “My turn. Draw!”

“Hold on!” Horiuchi shouted. “Dogmaguy! Life Absolute!” A purple aura glowed around both him and Dogmaguy, and he glowered as his life points lowered to 2000.

***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP / 2 = 2000 LP*

“What happened?” Mark shouted to Chiba. “Shougo’s life points just went in half, and his opponent didn’t even attack.”

“It’s D-HERO Dogmaguy’s special effect,” Chiba explained. “When a player summons him, his opponent’s life points are halved on their next turn.”

“Well… that’s not fair at all,” Mark mumbled.

“I play the magic card ‘Ancient Rule’,” Shougo said, showing his opponent the card. “It lets me special summon a level 5 or higher normal monster from my hand… and I choose my Red-Eyes Black Dragon.”

The legendary dragon roared as it appeared on the field.

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2400 ATK)*

“That’s a nice move,” Aino remarked. “But I wonder what he thinks he’s going to accomplish, since it’s 900 points less powerful than Dogmaguy.”

“He’s just showing off,” Katsuki said. “He knows he hasn’t got a shot so he might as well show everyone he has rare cards.”

“I set one card facedown to end my turn,” Shougo said.

“Is that all? This will be a more pathetic display than I thought,” Horiuchi said. “Now Destiny Draw’s effect activates, and after I draw one card, I can draw two more.”

He then looked at his hand and sneered. “This duel is already won,” Horiuchi declared. “I’m playing the magic card… ‘Fusion’!”

“‘Fusion’? D-HEROs have a fusion?” some among the crowd murmured.

Tenjouin’s eyes widened and she touched her mouth with her hands. *Could it be…* she thought to herself. *Could he be using* that *card?*

“I’ll fuse the D-HERO Dogmaguy on the field… with the ‘D-HERO Bloo-D’ in my hand!” Horiuchi shouted. “Now you will all see the ultimate card of destiny that will seal Aoyama’s fate!”

A warrior wearing heavily-plated dragon shaped armor entered the field. It wielded an arm blade much like Dogmaguy’s and bore a menacing scowl.

“I fusion summon Dragoon D-END to the field!” Horiuchi shouted.

***Dragoon D-END*** *— LV10 Dark Warrior (3000 ATK)*

“This is unacceptable!” Tenjouin said. “Kiyotaki-kouchou, this duel has to be stopped now! Dragoon D-END is not supposed to be in the structure deck. This is no longer an exhibition duel — this is a grudge match!”

“Let’s wait and see how Aoyama-kun handles this,” Kiyotaki replied.

“What?!” Tenjoin threw her hands out in appeal. “You can’t be serious, Kiyotaki-kouchou! To allow a boy like Aoyama-kun to suffer this intense situation!”

“The strongest iron must go through the hottest furnace,” Kiyotaki responded. “Otherwise its future bonds will be weak. This is something this boy must experience.”

*What are you thinking… Kiyotaki-kouchou!?* Tenjouin thought.

Horiuchi held his cards aloft as he taunted his opponent. “My monster could battle and defeat your Red-Eyes, but I have a better idea. Let’s end the match now! Dragoon D-END’s special effect, activate! I’ll select a monster on your side of the field and destroy it, and *you* take damage equal to its attack power! The monster I choose, of course, is Red-Eyes Black Dragon!”

The chestpiece on Dragoon began to glow as the monster reared back, and then it shot out a blast of energy at Shougo’s prized dragon.

“The End of Fate!” Horiuchi declared.

“Shougo only has 2000 life points!” Mark said. “He’s going to lose!”

But Shougo gave a mirthful smile. “Are you always this predictable, Horiuchi-kun?”

“What did you say, you little brat?!” Horiuchi snapped.

“Reverse card open… ‘Mysterious Wok’!” Shougo shouted. “By sacrificing one monster on my field, I gain life points equal to its attack or defense points! I choose… Red-Eyes Black Dragon, and gain 2400 life points. And your Dragoon, without a target… is powerless.”

The Red-Eyes shimmered away from the field, and Dragoon’s magical attack hit air. Shougo’s life points rose to 4400.

***Shougo*** *— 2000 LP + 2400 = 4400 LP*

“‘Powerless’, you say?” Horiuchi snorted. “Hardly! Your field is wide open and I haven’t attacked yet.”

“But since you used Dragoon D-END’s effect, you can’t enter your Battle Phase this turn,” Shougo replied.

“What? How did a little worm like you find that information out?”

Shougo gave an annoyed look. “It’s called reading,” he muttered.

Horiuchi muttered and placed another facedown magic/trap card on the field. “Turn end,” he spat bitterly.

“My turn,” Shougo said. ‘Draw. I play the magic card ‘Angel’s Charity’, drawing three cards and discarding two.’ He placed Meteor Dragon and Blood Vorse into the cemetery. “Next, I play the magic card ‘Foolish Burial’, dumping a Newdoria from my deck to the graveyard. Can you guess what happens next?”

Horiuchi chuckled. “Bring it on,” he taunted.

“I special summon to the field… Dark Armed Dragon.”

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

“There it is,” Katsuki said. “That boy is lucky to have that card in his hand and the means to summon it.”

“You’re not angry?” Aino asked.

Katsuki crossed her hands. “Honestly, as unlikely as it is… I want Aoyama-kun to beat this guy. This was supposed to be an exhibition duel, but Horiuchi isn’t playing fair.”

“And that bothers you?”

“I’m not completely heartless, you know, Naomi-chan…”

“Let’s get this troublesome creature out of the way,” Shougo said. “I remove Newdoria from play to destroy Dragoon D-END.”

The dark dragon roared and reared its arms back.

“Dark Genocide!”

Black energy waves were slung at Horiuchi’s Dragoon D-END, shaking the duel arena terribly with its explosion. But when the smoke cleared, Dragoon D-END was unharmed.

Horiuchi grasped his face and then reared back and laughed madly. “You say you can read, but you couldn’t see that Dragoon cannot be touched by the effects of magic, trap and monster cards?” he shouted. “And he has more attack points than Dark Armed Dragon. So what can you do?”

“This is a problem,” Chiba said, adjusting his glasses. “Apparently, Horiuchi has a prototype version of Dragoon D-END. I don’t know how a Duel Academia student would be able to acquire such a thing.”

“No joke,” Mark said. “Immune to magic, trap and monster effects *and* can revive itself? I want Shougo to win but… I’m having a hard time thinking of how he can do it!”

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD: *The Fusion Monster, “Dragoon D-END”***
You may only summon this card by fusing “D-HERO — Dogmaguy” and “D-HERO — Bloo-D”. Once per turn, you may destroy one monster your opponent controls and inflict damage equal to its attack power. If you do this, skip your battle phase. This card is not affected by magic, trap or monster card effects.

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**Shougo:** “Why does everyone pick on me?”
**Aino:** “As the duel proceeds, Shougo nears his breaking point. Then he gets an opportunity he cannot turn down.”
**Chiba:** “Go for it, Shougo-kun! I want to see that guy be defeated by you in front of everyone for his cruelty.”
**Shougo:** “I understand, Chiba-kun. And I think I have a plan…”

**Aino:** "Shougo devises a last minute strategy and shocks the entire school. I hate to sound like an American announcer, but you don't want to miss the next chapter: **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: '*Shougo's Pinch! Dark Angel Zerato Arrives*'**."
**Mark:** "What are you saying? American announcers are the best!"
**Katsuki:** "*Baka…*"

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY DAISUKE HORIUCHI:

**REASONING**
*Normal Magic*
Your opponent selects a monster Level. Pick up and send cards to the cemetery until you pick up one that can be Normal Summoned, and if the monster Level does not match the declared number, Special Summon it to the field; otherwise, send it to the cemetery.

**D-HERO DIABOLICGUY (Destiny Hero — Malicious)**
*Effect Monster (L5 Dark Warrior, 800/800)*
By removing this card in your cemetery from play,

select 1 “D-HERO Diabolicguy” from your Deck and Special Summon it.

**MONSTER GATE**
*Normal Magic*
Sacrifice 1 Monster you control. Pick up and send cards to the cemetery until you pick up one that can be Normal Summoned, and Special Summon it to the field.

**D-HERO DIAMONDGUY (Destiny Hero — Diamond Dude)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Warrior, 1400/1600)*
Once per turn, you can look at the top card of your deck. If it is a Normal Magic card, send it to the cemetery and you may activate its effect during the Main Phase of your next turn. Otherwise, return it to the bottom of your Deck.

**DESTINY DRAW**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 “D-HERO” card from your hand. Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**D-HERO DISKGUY (Destiny Hero — Disk Commander)**
*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Warrior, 300/300)*
If this card if Special Summoned from the cemetery, draw 2 cards.

**D-HERO DOGMAGUY (Destiny Hero — Dogma)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Warrior, 3400/2400)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by sacrificing 3 monsters, including at least 1 "D-HERO". If this card is Special Summoned, halve your opponent's Life Points during their next Standby Phase.

**FUSION (Polymerization)**
*Normal Magic*
Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion Monster card from your hand or side of the field to the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck.

**D-HERO BLOO-D (Destiny Hero — Plasma)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Warrior, 1900/600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by sacrificing 3 monsters. Once per turn, select a monster your opponent controls and place it under your control as an Equip Card equipped to this card. (Only 1 monster can be equipped at a time.) This card gains Attack power equal to half the Attack power of the equipped monster, and any effects the card has.

**DRAGOON D-END (Destiny End Dragoon)**
*Fusion Monster (L10 Dark Warrior, 3000/3000)*
"D-HERO Dogmaguy" + 'D-HERO Bloo-D'
A Fusion Summon of this monster can only be conducted with the above Fusion Material Monsters. Once per turn, you may destroy 1 monster your opponent controls and inflict damage equal to that monster's Attack points. If you activate this effect, you cannot enter your Battle Phase this turn. During your Standby Phase, this card exists in your cemetery, you may remove 1 "D-HERO" Monster in your cemetery from play to Special Summon this card.

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CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**ANCIENT RULE (Ancient Rules)**
*Normal Magic*
Special Summon a Level 5 or higher Normal Monster from your hand.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON (Red-Eyes B. Dragon)**
*Normal Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
A ferocious dragon with a deadly attack.

**MYSTERIOUS WOK (Mystik Wok)**

*Instant Magic*

Sacrifice 1 monster and gain Life Points equal to either its attack or defense points.

**ANGEL'S CHARITY (Graceful Charity)**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 3 cards from your deck. Then, discard 2 cards from your hand to the Cemetery.

**METEOR DRAGON**

*Normal Monster (L5 Earth Dragon, 1800/2000)*

This dragon appeared from the sky and crashed to the earth.

**BLOOD VORSE (Vorse Raider)**

*Normal Monster (L4 Dark Beast-Warrior, 1900/1200)*

This wicked Beast-Warrior does every horrid thing imaginable and loves it! His axe bears the marks of his countless victims.

**FOOLISH BURIAL**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 Monster card in your deck and send it to the cemetery.

**NEWDORIA**

*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*

When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, destroy 1 monster on the field.

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**

*Effect Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*

This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

# 12. Shougo's Pinch!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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Shougo slapped his ace card onto his duel disk. "I special summon to the field… Dark Armed Dragon."

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

"Let's get this troublesome creature out of the way," Shougo said. "I remove Newdoria from play to destroy Dragoon D-END. Dark Genocide!"

Horiuchi grasped his face and then reared back and laughed madly. “You say you can read, but you couldn’t see that Dragoon cannot be touched by the effects of magic, trap and monster cards?” he shouted. “And he has more attack points than Dark Armed Dragon. So what can you do?”

“This is a problem,” Chiba said, adjusting his glasses. “Apparently, Horiuchi has a prototype version of Dragoon D-END. I don’t know how a Duel Academia student would be able to acquire such a thing.”

“No joke,” Mark said. “Immune to magic, trap and monster effects *and* can revive itself? I want Shougo to win but… I’m having a hard time thinking of how he can do it!”

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Twelve: “Shougo’s Pinch! Dark Angel Zerato Arrives”***

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***Horiuchi*** *— 4000 LP*
***Shougo*** *— 4400 LP*

Tenjouin bit her lip as she watched the proceedings. *That can't be*, she thought. *That's the prototype card. It was altered to remove the protection effect before it was released to the Pro Duelist world. How did Horiuchi-kun get his hands on something like that? Did he bring it here just to humiliate Aoyama-kun in front of the whole school?*

"You shouldn't be worried," Kiyotaki said with a faint smile. "Whatever that Obelisk Blue student had planned, it's having the opposite effect. Look at the students."

Indeed, the students were whispering to themselves already about the suspicion of foul play.

Shougo's eyes widened and he grit his teeth. "So… that's what you plan to do," he said with a sour look. "You're lower than I imagined you to be, Horiuchi!"

"Don't even think you can consider talking to me that way," Horiuchi said. "I'm going to defeat you here and show you that you can't talk big because you can get rare cards! And I'll avenge my friend, Watanabe-san!"

"Whatever you say," Shougo said. "I'll remove Blood Vors and Red-Eyes Black Dragon from play

and destroy your facedown magic cards. Dark Genocide!”

The black energy bolts destroyed Horiuchi’s D-Shield and Magic Cylinder.

“Nice job, but it’s pointless,” Horiuchi said. “Next turn, I’ll erase your famous card from the field!”

“Do whatever you have to,” Shougo said. “I set one magic/trap and one monster card facedown. Turn end.”

“My turn,” Horiuchi shouted. “Draw! And I’ll activate the magic card ‘Doctor-D’. By removing Dogmaguy in my cemetery from play, I’ll revive D-HERO Diskguy!”

The bladed warrior appeared on the field.

***D-HERO Diskguy*** *(300 ATK)*

“Diskguy’s special effect activates,” Horiuchi said. “When he’s summoned from the cemetery, I draw two more cards. And now I sacrifice him to summon D-HERO Dashguy in attack mode!”

The hologram of Discguy faded to be replaced by a sleek-looking monster with wheeled feet.

***D-HERO Dashguy*** *— LV6 Dark Warrior (2100 ATK)*

“And if you think I’m going to attack and risk triggering your trap, you’re wrong! Dragoon D-END! Erase Aoyama’s Dark Armed Dragon! The End of Fate!”

The dragoon’s firey bolt destroyed Shougo’s dragon and lowered his life points to 1600.

***Shougo*** *— 4400 LP — 2800 = 1600 LP*

“Oh man,” Mark bemoaned. “I thought for sure his facedown would be something that would help him.”

“An Osiris is an Osiris, after all,” Katsuki said, shrugging. “I’m all for rooting for the underdog, but the outcome here is clear.”

“My turn,” Shougo said. “Draw. First I’ll summon the monster card — Defender of the Temple, in defense mode!”

A strange-looking translucent creature appeared on the field and guarded its body with its oversided hands.

***Defender of the Temple*** *— LV4 Earth Demon (1900 DEF)*

“Next, I flip my hidden monster card — Metamorpot,” Shougo announced.

***Metamorpot*** *— LV2 Earth Rock (700 ATK)*

“We both discard our hands, and then we draw five new cards. Or at least — I will. Defender of the Temple prohibits the opponent from drawing outside of the draw phase… so you don’t get any cards!” He placed his hand into the graveyard and began to draw.

“Awesome, Shougo-kun!” Chiba shouted.

“Not bad,” Katsuki acknowledged.

Tenjouin smiled quietly watching the boy play.

Horiuchi grunted angrily as he placed his hand into the graveyard.

Shougo then shouted. “Reverse card open — Dark Dimension’s Release! I select a dark-attribute monster that was removed from play, and I summon it! Return to the game, Red-Eyes Black Dragon.”

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *(2400 ATK)*

Horiuchi scoffed at the dragon’s return. “What’s he going to do?”

“Next, I’ll play the magic card ‘Dragon’s Mirror’ — by removing from play cards from my field and graveyard, I can fusion summon a monster. I remove the Red-Eyes from my field and Meteor Dragon from my graveyard… to summon Meteor Black Dragon!”

The image of a mirror shone on the duel arena and absorbed the Red-Eyes as the reflection of Meteor Dragon showed within. In a flash of light and fire, the large, shelled molten dragon appeared and gave a deep, rumbling shout.

***Meteor Black Dragon*** *— LV8 Fire Dragon (3500 ATK)*

“3500 attack points!” Walker said. “It can beat the Dragoon!”

“But isn’t Shougo-kun forgetting?” Chiba pondered. “Dragoon D-END can revive itself next turn by removing a D-HERO in the grave from play. And then there’s nothing he can do to prevent his loss.”

“But he has five cards in his hand,” Mark replied. “Surely he’s got a way to deal with that now!”

“Meteor Black Dragon!” Shougo ordered. “Destroy Dragoon D-END! Meteor Dive!”

The dragon tucked itself into its shell and threw itself at the armored monster. Horiuchi yelled as his prize card was destroyed and his life points fell to 3500.

***Horiuchi** — 4000 LP — 500 = 3500 LP*

“I’ll set two cards facedown and end my turn,” Shougo said. “You’re up.”

“And you’re down in a moment,” Horiuchi said. “I draw, and activate Dragoon D-END’s effect. By removing D-HERO Diabolicguy in my graveyard from play… revive, Dragoon D-END!”

Just as easily as he was destroyed, the Final D-Card was back on the field.

***Dragoon D-END** (3000 ATK)*

“And now, we’ll end this — Watanabe-kun and I, together. Dragoon D-END! Destroy Aoyama’s Meteor Black Dragon!”

“You just can’t help yourself, can you?” Shougo muttered. “You take any opportunity to make me look bad. Well, too bad, Horiuchi — you can forget about it! Reverse card open — Dimension-Induced Explosion!”

“Dimension-Induced Explosion?” Horiuchi grumbled.

“By returning Meteor Black Dragon to my fusion deck, we both can summon two cards removed from play to the field. I’ll summon my Red-Eyes Black Dragon and my Meteor Dragon.”

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon*** *(2400 ATK)*
***Meteor Dragon*** *(2000 DEF)*

“Wow,” Chiba said. “That isn’t a card he normally uses.”

“He must have altered his deck in preparation for this duel,” Mark nodded. “Very impressive!”

Horiuchi laughed aloud one more time. “You don’t need me to make you look back, you rat! You do that well enough on your own! I’ll summon my two Diabolicguys in defense mode.”

***D-HERO Diabolicguy*** *(800 DEF)*
***D-HERO Diabolicguy*** *(800 DEF)*

“Turn end.”

“Alright then,” Shougo said. “My turn… draw.”

The audience seemed to draw in a breath in unison as Shougo pulled his card.

He glanced at his hand and smiled faintly. “It looks like I win.”

“Isn’t it a little too early to brag, you little runt?” Horiuchi countered. “None of those monsters can stand up to my Dragoon…”

Shougo just smiled and showed Horiuchi his “Fusion” card.

“I fuse Red-Eyes and Meteor Dragon together to return Meteor Black Dragon to the field,” Shougo said, as the two monsters were merged by the magic of the card to re-create the molten beast.

***Meteor Black Dragon*** *(3500 ATK)*

“Hah, so you can beat my Dragoon D-END with that,” Horiuchi scoffed. “It’ll come back next turn no matter what you do.”

“I haven’t normal summoned yet,” Shougo reminded him. “I tribute my Metamorpot and my Defender of the Temple to summon my newest card to the field.”

The two monsters’ holograms shimmered away and a deep rumble reverberated throughout the arena.

“This is it!” Chiba said excitedly. “Shougo-kun is going to reveal the new card he received!”

Shougo closed his eyes and recited from an unknown source within himself. “In the new world, even angels are dragged into darkness. Demonstrate my meaning!”

Slowly, from the floor, a winged warrior appeared, with red bat wings and a menacing jagged sword. He slashed a few times with it before entering a battle stance.

“I summon Dark Angel Zerato in attack mode,” Shougo declared.

***Dark Angel Zerato*** *— LV8 Dark Angel (2800 ATK)*

“Not bad,” Horiuchi said. “But even at 2800 attack points, it’s not going to make much of a dent. My D-HERO Diabolicguys are in defense and my D-HERO Dashguy has 2100.”

“They won’t be around for much longer,” Shougo said. “I activate Dark Angel Zerato’s special ability. By discarding Kuriboh from my hand to the cemetery, I destroy all the monsters on your field.”

He placed his Kuriboh card into the graveyard slot and Zerato's sword began to glow with a dark energy.

Shougo pointed at Horiuchi's field. "Dark Angel Zerato… Wicked Light!"

A shimmering light shot out of the sword, and in a moment obliterated Horiuchi's Destiny Heroes. Horiuchi raised his duel disk in front of his face to shield himself.

Dragoon D-END, however, remained unscathed.

"Nice try, but you forgot about D-END's effect again," Horiuchi said. "And even if you destroy him and attack me directly with Zerato I'll still have life points left. And on your next turn it's over!"

"You bastard," Shougo said with a shake of his head.

"What did you say?!" Horiuchi exploded with a sudden rage, having lost his tolerance for the Osiris Red's nerve.

"You say I only win because of rare cards that I stole, and yet look at yourself — using a prototype card that never even was released, just so you can get your revenge. But I'm going to use that against

you now, and once you lose to an Osiris dropout boy, you'll never be able to show your face around here again!"

"Is that what you told Watanabe-kun when you crushed his spirit?" Horiuchi demanded. "Huh?!"

"I never dueled that guy," Shougo replied. "But he's a liar just like you. He threatened to accuse me of stealing and tried to take my cards from me. And I almost gave in. I was tired of people like you and him making my life miserable… but not anymore! I see now, you are all nothing but talk!"

"How can he say that after an Obelisk destroyed him?" Katsuki wondered.

"I thought you didn't want Horiuchi-kun to win, Shiho-chan?" Aino asked.

"That doesn't mean this kid should go around saying unnecessary things," Katsuki smirked.

Chancellor Kiyotaki smiled. "Now he is starting to grow," he said.

Tenjouin sighed and crossed her arms tighter.

"I activate… the field magic, Dark Zone," Shougo said, placing the card into his field slot. The arena became covered with purple clouds, lightning

bolts circling the space wherein the two dueled. “All dark attribute monsters will gain 500 attack points and lose 400 defense points. That means Dark Angel Zerato’s attack power grows to 3300.”

The demonic angel glowed with a dark aura as its power rose.

***Dark Angel Zerato*** *— 2800 ATK + 500 = 3300 ATK*

Horiuchi howled madly. “You idiot!” he laughed. “Dragoon D-END is a dark monster too! His power will go up to 3500, and your Meteor Black Dragon will destroy itself fighting him. It’s a fire monster, after all! And your silly little angel still can’t defeat me. It’s still my game! I must thank you for giving me the win! Hahahahaha!”

But the Dragoon’s power didn’t go up.

“What’s going on?” Horiuchi shouted. “Why isn’t my D-END’s power going up? You must be cheating!”

“The irony,” Shougo said. “It makes me sick. Or have you already forgotten? Dragoon D-END isn’t affected by magic, trap or monster effects. That doesn’t mean only effects that hurt him.”

“No!” Horiuchi shouted desperately. “Wait a second!”

“Meteor Black Dragon!” Shougo shouted. “Destroy Dragoon D-END one more time!”

Once again, the dragon crashed its shell-encased body into the dragoon, and Horiuchi yelled in seeming pain as his life dropped to 3000.

“Dark Angel Zerato! Finish this! Wicked Wave!”

Zerato gave a battle cry, raising its sword, and dropped it to the ground, shooting a breaking beam directly at Horiuchi. It knocked him on his back as his life points hit zero.

The crowd erupted in noise, equal parts cheering, booing and gasps of shock. Shougo stared at the ground and then up at the crowd. Many people could be seen giving him support, and others were thumbing him down. He frowned and looked down at the ground again.

Horiuchi helplessly clenched the floor with his fists, eyes wide in shock. Slowly he got up and pointed at his opponent. “This… this only proves my point!” he shouted. “Aoyama won with a surprise tactic and a rare card… another one that’s not even easily available to the elite!”

“Haven’t you had enough?!” Shougo shouted angrily. “You’re just making things worse for yourself!”

Silence hit the auditorium.

“You used a prototype card to try to beat me and you’re still going on about that?” he went on. “I was in the library today studying the Destiny Hero cards you used. They’re really awesome! But you only used them to try to make me look stupid, just like all you Obelisks do. You probably didn’t even bother to find out what kind of cards I use.”

“Why should I have?” Horiuchi grumbled.

“Well, the result speaks for itself,” Shougo said. “And if that weren’t enough, you used an illegal card. Think you can just get away with that?”

“And… what are you going to do about it? What are any of you going to do? It’s the money of families like mine that *built* this school! Without me you’d still be playing on paper pads pretending that your silly dragon cards are alive!”

Murmurs erupted in the crowd as their opinion became apparent. No matter what anyone thought of Shougo, nobody was on Horiuchi’s side.

“Aoyama Shougo is the winner,” the announcer shouted over the loudspeakers. Shougo turned around and left the arena.

Horiuchi lost himself in his embarassment and anger. “Don’t turn your back on me, dropout boy! This isn’t over!”

“No, it isn’t. You’ll have to answer for your actions soon, I’m sure. As for me, I’m going back to my room to study. I have classes to get to.”

“Amazing,” Abe observed. “The boy was in a terrible situation because of that card, but he used its abilities against it.”

“And to think that boy is so quiet in the dorm,” Matsutani added. “You’d never think that kind of fire existed in him.”

Tenjouin nodded, but her expression was stern. “In any case, we must call Horiuchi Daisuke to account for his actions. We’ll have to find out how he got that card, and possibly organize another exhibition.”

“Could you hold off on that until tomorrow morning, Tenjouin-san?” Kiyotaki asked.

“What?! But… why?”

“I must look into the matter myself,” Kiyotaki said. “Horiuchi-san and his colleagues will no doubt be upset that their son failed so utterly. I’ll have to quell their displeasure before any academic sanctions are taken.”

Tenjouin frowned deeply and tried to maintain her professional composure. “Kiyotaki-kouchou, with all due respect, if we coddle the Obelisk elites any further, it will justify the distrust that the Ra and Osiris students already have for them.”

“Every society has its elites and its untouchables,” Kiyotaki said. “It can’t be avoided. Its stability depends on that existence. In the meantime, I must handle the task of keeping this school afloat. Please understand, Tenjouin-san.”

“I understand how you feel,” Matsutani said, touching Tenjouin’s shoulder. “But the Chancellor is right.”

“Don’t worry, we’ll all make sure Horiuchi-kun explains himself,” Abe added.

Tenjouin sighed and nodded. “I have to get to my lesson plans for tomorrow,” she said. “Please excuse me.”

As she walked away, her mind was on the duel she'd just seen, and that side of Shougo that only seemed to come out when he dueled. *His last words to Horiuchi-kun were a bit foreboding,* she thought. *Is it possible?*

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Horiuchi bit his lip as he looked at the sea surrounding Duel Academia Island. "How humiliating!" he said to himself. "I'm going to get that rat Aoyama back, though… in spades."

"Why wait?" a voice said. "You've got a chance to get him back now."

"Who's there?" Horiuchi turned, shouting at where the voice came from.

The sound of a duel disk activating was heard. "Duel me," came the reply.

"Aoyama? Why should I? Nobody's watching. Get lost, come back in the morning."

"Duel now," the voice said, approaching closer from the shadows.

"Are you deaf? I told you…"

The voice interrupted him. “You don’t have a choice. You will duel now. Or…”

Horiuchi’s anger was aroused by this attitude. “Fine! Bring it on!” He turned on his duel disk and stepped forward.

---

The next day went much differently than the kind of day Shougo was accustomed to. No longer did he hear whispers of how lucky he was or how he could only win with rare cards. Some people even greeted him in a friendly fashion as he made his way to class.

But Shougo didn’t change. He was as sullen as ever.

Chiba met up with his roommate by the Osiris Red dorms after class as the sun went down. “Shougo-kun, it’s great,” he said. “You got what you wanted… people are respecting you now. That’s awesome.…Isn’t it?”

Shougo looked at his friend and mustered a smile. “It’s good that I’m getting respect,” he nodded. “But did you see the way I acted during that duel?”

“What about it? He was telling lies about you, trying to slander you and embarrass you in the whole school. If anything, you were easy on him.”

But Shougo shook his head. “That cruelty you saw… it didn’t have anything to do with that. I was just angry. My opponent… didn’t matter. I just wanted to make him look foolish, too. That’s… that’s not who I am, Chiba-kun.”

Chiba blinked. “Shougo-kun…”

“When I’m not dueling, I don’t want to hurt anyone,” Shougo sighed. “But when I’m dueling, it seems like hurting people is all I want to do. Until I figure out why that is…”

He glanced at his hand, clenched it, and sighed deeper. “I’m at a school, and I’m supposed to be here to learn. I’m going to focus on that.”

“What are you saying?” Chiba asked. “You’re not going to quit dueling, are you? Haven’t we already gone over this?”

“Maybe if I learn more… I can understand what’s going on. What if I have to duel you again, Chiba-kun? I don’t want to lose control like I did yesterday. Until then, I really shouldn’t duel…”

“That’s the biggest crock I’ve ever heard,” a female voice in the distance said.

Shougo and Chiba turned to where the voice came from. A dark-skinned girl wearing a Ra Yellow uniform stood before them, with a duel disk strapped to her arm.

“You can forget about quitting,” she said. “I’m here to challenge you, right here, right now.”

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster, “Dark Angel Zerato”***
By discarding 1 Dark-attribute monster from your hand, this card can destroy all of your opponent’s monsters, but if you use this effect, he will be sent to the cemetery at the end of your turn. If you have 4 unique Dark-attribute monsters in your cemetery, you can sacrifice 1 Dark-attribute monster to summon him.

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**Isabel:** “You think you can just quit? Look at what you’ve done for this school!”
**Aino:** “The challenger’s name is Isabel Suárez. She sees Aoyama Shougo as an inspiration, and refuses

to let him quit."
**Shougo:** "I didn't ask to be an inspiration to anyone! You shouldn't interfere with my life!"
**Aino:** "Shougo-kun nevertheless accepts the challenge, but quickly discovers the true power of Isabel's deck."
**Chiba:** "She's a really interesting person! If only she wasn't Shougo-kun's enemy this time…"
**Aino:** "Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Unrepentant Pride of a Duelist! Burn, Flame Spirit Ignis!'**."
**Isabel:** "The school is a better place because of you. We're better people because of you. Don't just walk away, Aoyama Shougo."

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY DAISUKE HORIUCHI:

**DRAGOON D-END (Destiny End Dragoon)**
*Fusion Monster (L10 Dark Warrior, 3000/3000)*
"D-HERO Dogmaguy" + 'D-HERO Bloo.D'
A Fusion Summon of this monster can only be conducted with the above Fusion Material Monsters. Once per turn, you may destroy 1 monster your opponent controls and inflict damage equal to that monster's Attack points. If you activate this effect,

you cannot enter your Battle Phase this turn. During your Standby Phase, this card exists in your cemetery, you may remove 1 “D-HERO” Monster in your cemetery from play to Special Summon this card.

**D — SHIELD**

*Normal Trap*

Activate only when an “D-HERO” monster you control in Attack position is selected as an attack target. Change that monster to Defense position and equip it with this card (this card becomes an Equip Card). The equipped monster cannot be destroyed by battle.

**MAGIC CYLINDER**

Normal Trap

Negate 1 attack from an opponent’s attacking monster and inflict damage to that player equal to the attacking monster’s Attack points.

**DOCTOR-D**

*Normal Magic*

Remove from play 1 “D-HERO” in your cemetery to Special Summon 1 “D-HERO” from your cemetery.

**D-HERO DOGMAGUY (Destiny Hero — Dogma)**

*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Warrior, 3400/2400)*

This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by sacrificing 3 monsters, including at least 1 “D-HERO”. If this card is Special Summoned, halve your opponent’s Life Points during their next Standby Phase.

**D-HERO DISKGUY (Destiny Hero — Disk Commander)**
*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Warrior, 300/300)*
If this card if Special Summoned from the cemetery, draw 2 cards.

**D-HERO DASHGUY (Destiny Hero — Dasher)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Warrior, 2100/1000)*
Once per turn, by sacrificing 1 monster, this card gains 1000 Attack points until the end of this turn. If this card attacks, it is changed to Defense position at the end of the Battle Phase. While this card is in the cemetery, one time only during your Draw Phase, when you draw a Monster Card, you can show it to your opponent and Special Summon it.

**D-HERO DIABOLICGUY (Destiny Hero — Malicious)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Warrior, 800/800)*
By removing this card in your cemetery from play,

select 1 “D-HERO Diabolicguy” from your Deck and Special Summon it.

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CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

**BLOOD VORSE (Vorse Raider)**
*Normal Monster (L4 Dark Beast-Warrior, 1900/1200)*
This wicked Beast-Warrior does every horrid thing imaginable and loves it! His axe bears the marks of his countless victims.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON (Red-Eyes B. Dragon)**
*Normal Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
A ferocious dragon with a deadly attack.

**DEFENDER OF THE TEMPLE (Protector of the Sanctary)**

*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Demon, 1100/1900)*
Your opponent cannot draw cards, except during the Draw Phase.

**METAMORPOT (Morphing Jar)**
*Effect Monster (L2 Earth Rock, 700/600)*
FLIP: Both players discard their hands. Then both players draw 5 cards.

**DARK DIMENSION'S RELEASE (Escape from the Dark Dimension)**
*Continuous Trap*
Select 1 Dark-Attribute Monster that is removed from play and Special Summon it. When this card is removed from the field, destroy that monster. When that monster is destroyed, destroy this card.

**DRAGON'S MIRROR**
*Normal Magic*
Remove from play Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Dragon-Type Fusion Monster Card from your side of the field or your Graveyard, and Special Summon the selected Fusion Monster from your Fusion Deck. (This Special Summon is treated as a Fusion Summon.)

**METEOR DRAGON**
*Normal Monster (L5 Earth Dragon, 1800/2000)*

This dragon appeared from the sky and crashed to the earth.

**METEOR BLACK DRAGON (Meteor B. Dragon)**
*Fusion Monster (L8 Fire Dragon, 3500/2000)*
"Red-Eyes Black Dragon" + "Meteor Dragon"

**DIMENSION-INDUCED EXPLOSION (Dimension Explosion)**
*Instant Magic*
Return 1 face-up Fusion Monster you control to the Fusion Deck. Then both players select up to 2 Monster Cards in the Discard pile and Special Summon them.

**FUSION (Polymerization)**
*Normal Magic*
Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion Monster card from your hand or side of the field to the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck.

**DARK ANGEL ZERATO (Darklord Zerato)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Angel, 2800/2300)*
If there are 4 or more Dark-attribute monsters with different names in your Graveyard, you can Normal Summon this monster by sacrificing 1 Dark-attribute monster. You can send 1 Dark-attribute monster

from your hand to the cemetery to destroy all monsters your opponent controls. If you activate this effect, destroy this card during the End Phase of this turn.

**KURIBOH**
*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Demon, 300/200)*
When your opponent attacks you during their Battle Phase, you may discard this card from your hand to make the Battle Damage from that attack 0.

**DARK ZONE (Mystic Plasma Zone)**
*Field Magic*
Raise the ATK of all Dark-attribute monsters by 500 points, and lower their DEF by 400 points.

# 13. The Unrepentant Pride of a Duelist!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Thirteen: "The Unrepentant Pride of a Duelist! Burn, Flame Spirit Ignis!"***

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After the school day was over, Asuka Tenjouin was handling the afterschool matters with her

attendants; preparing the lesson plan for the next day and taking care of affairs that could not be carried through during school hours.

“So the newly released cards have been added to the database?” she asked.

“Yes, they’re in the computer system now,” her attendant replied. “It’s all taken care of.”

“Okay, then. There’s just the matter of Horiuchi Daisuke. I need you to prepare a paper to send to Chancellor Kiyo…”

Tenjouin’s attendant blinked. “Didn’t someone tell you?”

Tenjouin paused, her heart seeming to know what had happened already. “What?”

“He quit Duel Academia last night,” the attendant replied. “Apparently he was too embarrassed over his loss, and decided to leave.”

Tenjouin bit her lip and turned away, looking out the window.

“Was that before or after Kiyotaki-kouchou met with Horiuchi’s family?”

“I’m sorry,” the attendant said with an apologetic tone. “I don’t know anything more than that.”

Tenjouin took a pen in her hand and nibbled on its tip, preoccupied. *There is something going on here that I’m not aware of,* she thought. *I feel as though there’s something I should do about it… but I’m in the dark! Kiyotaki-kouchou… what exactly are your plans for this school? And do I* want *to be part of them?*

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“When I’m not dueling, I don’t want to hurt anyone,” Shougo sighed. “But when I’m dueling, it seems like hurting people is all I want to do. Until I figure out why that is…”

He glanced at his hand, clenched it, and sighed deeper. “I’m at a school, and I’m supposed to be here to learn. I’m going to focus on that.”

“What are you saying?” Chiba asked. “You’re not going to quit dueling, are you? Haven’t we already gone over this?”

“Maybe if I learn more… I can understand what’s going on. What if I have to duel you again, Chiba-

kun? I don’t want to lose control like I did yesterday. Until then, I really shouldn’t duel…”

“That’s the biggest crock I’ve ever heard,” a female voice in the distance said.

Shougo and Chiba turned to where the voice came from. A dark-skinned girl wearing a Ra Yellow uniform stood before them, with a duel disk strapped to her arm.

“You can forget about quitting,” she said. “I’m here to challenge you, right here, right now.”

“Who are you?” Chiba said. “And who do you think you are to insult Shougo-kun that way?”

“I’m Isabel Suarez of the Ra dorm,” the girl replied. “I came to challenge the boy who showed up the Obelisk Blues for the scumbags that they are, but I found a quitter instead! I’m very disappointed.”

Shougo looked up at the girl and narrowed his eyes. “Do you think you know anything about what I’m going through?” he asked. “That person you saw yesterday wasn’t me. And I don’t want to be that person!”

“You don’t want to be strong? You don’t want to stand up for your beliefs? Give me a break!” Isabel

shouted. “Do you have any idea the repercussions your victory’s already having on Duel Academia? Obelisks aren’t so quick to insult Ras and Osirises when they pass by. We’re getting more respect! Isn’t that what you wanted in the first place?”

“It’s true that I want people to respect me,” Shougo said. “But not because I’ll be cruel to them if they don’t!”

“Okay, enough of this,” Isabel said, and raised her duel disk. “Let’s have a duel. Unless your decision to quit is effective immediately!”

Shougo sighed and looked at Chiba, who just nodded. He took his duel disk out of his backpack. “I’m not going to hold back, but whether I win or lose this, don’t think you can change my mind.”

Isabel placed her deck in her duel disk. “If you’re just afraid of yourself, then I have no reason to hold back either.”

“Duel,” both players shouted, while Chiba looked on.

***Isabel*** *— 4000 LP*
***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP*

“My turn,” Isabel said. “Draw. Shougo… shall I call you that? I want you to prepare yourself. I won’t show any mercy to a coward like you!”

“Just play,” Shougo said.

“Very well,” Isabel replied. ‘I activate the continuous spell, ‘Tectonic Plate Rupture’.’ The image of a dark volcano with flowing lava was depicted on the card. “Here’s how it works. Once during my turn, if I control no monsters, I can summon a level 3 or lower fire-attribute monster from my deck.”

“Wow… that’s an interesting card,” Chiba commented. “I’ve never seen it before.”

“I’ll activate ’Tectonic Plate Rupture’s effect now,” Isabel said, fanning out her deck. “From my deck I’ll summon Mokutan #18 in defense mode.”

A wooden charcoal person appeared on the field and entered a protective posture.

***Mokutan #18*** *— LV1 Fire Pyro (2100 DEF)*

Chiba gasped, impressed. “2100 defense points! Awesome!”

“Don’t be fooled,” came a male voice from right next to Chiba. “That’s not the true meaning of her

deck.”

“Mark-kun!” Chiba shouted. “Where did you come from?”

“Isabel asked where Shougo was, so I assumed she was gunning for a duel,” Mark replied. “She’s a dangerous duelist. She’s a first year but people in Ra already fear her.”

“Really? Wow. I wonder if Shougo-kun can handle it.”

“Now for my Normal Summon, I play Blazing Hiita in defense mode,” Isabel said, placing the monster card on her duel disk. A young woman in revealing clothes appeared, swirling a flaming weapon.

***Blazing Hiita*** *— LV4 Fire Spellcaster (1500 DEF)*

“And now her monster effect will activate. By tributing my Mokutan, I can special summon a fire monster from my hand.”

Hiita lit a blaze under Mokutan #18 which consumed him into cinders.

“Come out… Fire Wing Pegasus! Attack mode!”

A blue winged horse with manes shaped like and colored as flames appeared.

***Fire Wing Pegasus*** *— LV6 Fire Beast (2250 ATK)*

“Wow! I haven’t seen that card in forever,” Chiba said, adjusting his glasses. “Very nice!”

“Reverse card set,” Isabel went on. “Turn end.”

“Well played,” Shougo said. “But I know that combo’s weakness. My turn… draw! And now I’ll activate from my hand the magic card ‘Dark World Dealings’! Now we both draw one card from our deck, then discard one card from our hands.”

“I draw,” Isabel said. “And discard Raging Flame Spirit.”

“And I’ll send Red-Eyes Black Dragon,” Shougo said. “Next I play the field magic card, ‘Dark Zone’! This powers up all dark monsters by 500. And then I’ll summon Blood Vorse in attack mode.”

The beast warrior appeared, waving his axe as the purple aura of Shougo’s field spell raised his power to 2400 points.

***Blood Vorse*** *— LV4 Dark Beast-Warrior (1900 ATK + 500 = 2400 ATK)*

“Interesting,” Mark said. “Now he has enough power to beat Fire Wing Pegasus. But…”

“But why do that when the real trouble is with the monster that summoned it?” Shougo nodded. “I’ll have Blood Vors attack your Blazing Hiita, Isabel-san… and when I destroy that, your Pegasus will be destroyed along with it. Go, Blood Vorse… destroy Hiita with Bloody Axe!”

Blood Vorse roared again and rushed Hiita, who reared back to block the blow. She was nevertheless destroyed.

Isabel just chuckled. “Sorry, but you’re not going to escape some damage this turn. Reverse card open… ‘Kareijutsu — Kurenai’! I sacrifice a monster on my side of the field and deal its attack points to you as damage. And of course I pick Fire Wing Pegasus!”

The monster’s form melted into fire, which turned into a ball that shot out into Shougo’s body. He yelled as his life points went down to 1750.

***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP — 2250 = 1750 LP*

“I’ll set one card facedown and end my turn,” Shougo muttered.

“Don’t worry, Shougo!” Chiba shouted. “You still have one monster left and she has none!”

“You forgot about her magic card,” Mark corrected him. “Since she controls no monsters, she can summon one from her deck.”

“Oh yeah…” Chiba chuckled and rubbed the back of his head. “I did forget.”

“My turn… draw,” Isabel said. “And I’ll activate Tectonic Plate Rupture’s effect. From my deck, I summon Invasion of Flames!”

A bonfire erupted from the ground, and an evil face could be made out.

***Invasion of Flames*** *— LV3 Fire Pyro (1300 ATK)*

Isabel then smiled. “Here it is, Shougo… the card that will communicate my feelings best. I summon… Flame Spirit Ignis in attack mode!”

A strange, humanoid foxlike creature with fur that seemed to be made of flames came out. He had many eyes on his head and flexed powerfully.

***Flame Spirit Ignis*** *— LV4 Fire Pyro (1500 ATK)*

“‘Flame Spirit Ignis’…” Chiba said. “I heard that card hadn’t been released in Japan yet.”

“This is how Isabel has won most of her duels,” Mark said. “Now we can see how she really plays.”

“Flame Spirit Ignis’ monster effect activates now,” Isabel said. “By sacrificing one fire monster on my field, I can hit my opponent for 100 points of damage for each fire monster in my graveyard.”

Ignis struck a pose, and the Invasion of Flames was snuffed out. A ball of fire then appeared in Ignis’ hand and started to grow.

“Mokutan #18, Fire Wing Pegasus, Hiita, Flame Sprite and Invasion of Flames,” Isabel counted off. “Take their fiery frustration now!”

Ignis threw the fireball at Shougo’s feet and it erupted in a pillar of flame. Shougo yelled as his life points took a 500-point hit.

***Shougo** — 1750 LP — 500 = 1250 LP*

“He’s got 1250 points now,” Chiba gasped. “In 2 turns, he’s lost more than half of his vitality!”

“That’s how Isabel plays,” Mark said. “She rarely attacks unless she has Ignis and that card out. No

matter what happens, she always manages to get it back. Her deck is all about burn."

"Shougo-kun can beat that," Chiba said. "I know he can! You can do it!"

"Well, it's fine," Shougo said. "I still have a monster and it's still way stronger than yours."

"Are you sure about that?" Isabel taunted, wagging a finger. "In fact, I was waiting for you to play a field magic card. So I could replace it with mine! Go… 'Burning Blood'!"

As Isabel placed the card on her field magic slot, the image of the purple clouds and lightning bolts shattered and fell away. Volcanic mountain regions began to erupt from the ground around them, spewing lava and magma. While it was an illusion, Chiba, Mark and Shougo could all feel real heat.

"'Burning Blood'… this card is just like your 'Dark Zone', Shougo, except it raises the power of fire monsters instead of dark monsters. Such as my Ignis, which goes up to 2000 attack points."

***Flame Spirit Ignis*** *(1500 ATK + 500 = 2000 ATK)*

"Ignis! Attack Blood Vorse… Soul Heater!"

Ignis gathered another fireball in its other hand and threw it at Blood Vorse, who shattered into polygons. Shougo took 100 more points of damage.

***Shougo** — 1250 LP — 100 = 1100 LP*

“It’s your move now,” Isabel said, closing her eyes. ‘I know you’ll continue to fight. But will you keep in your heart the people who count on you?’ She then opened her eyes and glared. “Or will you just follow your own selfish desires?”

“I don’t play Duel Monsters to send messages,” Shougo said. “I play to win. Draw. Reverse card open… ‘Legitimate Lineage’. I summon one normal monster from my cemetery to the field. Revive, Red-Eyes Black Dragon!”

Shougo’s favorite monster rose from the lava and let out a resounding roar.

***Red-Eyes Black Dragon** — LV7 Dark Dragon (2400 ATK)*

“And to add to that, I’ll summon Giant Virus in attack mode,” Shougo continued as a ball of toxic germs appeared on the field.

***Giant Virus** — LV2 Dark Demon (1000 ATK)*

“Red-Eyes! Destroy Ignis… Dark Mega Flare!”

A shot of energy shattered Ignis into pieces, and Isabel grunted as her Life Points took a hit.

***Isabel** — 4000 LP — 400 = 3600 LP*

“You don’t have anything else to protect you, so my Giant Virus will attack directly!” Shougo ordered. The ball of germs lost cohesion, turning into a cloud of toxicity that gathered around Isabel. She coughed and gagged as she took 1000 points of direct damage, her life now 2600.

***Isabel** — 3600 LP — 1000 = 2600 LP*

“Reverse card set,” Shougo went on. “Turn end.”

“I understand you only play to win,” Isabel said. “That’s fine… I feel the same way. But I don’t have anyone hanging their hopes on me. Do you understand your position, Shougo? As an Osiris Red who stands up to the school’s elites, you give hope to us all.”

“I don’t care about any of that!” Shougo shouted. “I didn’t ask to be a role model. I just want people to respect me. Acknowledge that I’m a duelist.”

Isabel drew a card. “Then you’re just another idol, aren’t you?” she asked. “I’m told that when you’re not dueling, you’re withdrawn and you keep

to yourself. You don’t talk to anybody. It’s like you think you’re better than everyone else. But you’ll only express that in a duel, isn’t that right?”

“That’s not what I think at all!”

“Whatever you say,” Isabel smirked. “I activate the magic card, ‘Akashic Record’. I’ll pick up two cards and if they’ve been played in this duel, I’ll have to remove them from the game. Otherwise, they go to my hand.”

She pulled two cards from her deck and showed them to her opponent. “‘Prominence Dragon’ and ‘Oil Drilling’,” she said. “I guess luck is on my side.” She placed the cards in her hand. “And now, ‘Tectonic Plate Rupture’s effect activates again. I summon ’Fire Trooper’ in attack mode!”

A gargoyle-like creature clad in a cape and battle armor appeared on the field, its had a flaming skull. It also wielded flames in either hand.

***Fire Trooper*** *— LV3 Fire Warrior (1000 ATK + 500 = 1500 ATK)*

“When I summon Fire Trooper, I can send it to the cemetery immediately, and inflict 1000 points of damage to the opponent,” Isabel said, as the Trooper

turned into a fireball and shot itself at Shougo. His lifepoints dropped to 150.

***Shougo** — 1150 LP — 1000 = 150 LP*

“It seems like the outcome of this match is decided,” Mark said.

“What do you mean?” Chiba said. “It’s true she has a monster in her hand, but Shougo-kun has a facedown.”

“The monster is ‘Solar Flare Dragon’,” Mark explained.

“What?”

“It does 500 points of damage during the opponent’s standby,” Mark said. “Isabel could just summon it and end her turn, and she would win.”

Shougo narrowed his eyes and grit his teeth. *I don’t know what she’s trying to say but… I just can’t lose! No matter what! I won’t let her make fun of me like everyone else…*

He felt something form in the pit of his stomach.

“Don’t get so caught up in your doubts! I activate the magic card ‘Fire Back’!” Isabel shouted. “By discarding Prominence Dragon from my hand, I can

special summon a fire monster from my graveyard… and the card I choose is Flame Spirit Ignis!”

The fox-like demon reappeared on the field.

***Flame Spirit Ignis*** *(1500 ATK + 500 = 2000 ATK)*

“She discarded Prominence Dragon to summon that?” Chiba asked, confused. “She might have thrown away her chance to win this!”

“No,” Mark said. “She’s already won. Remember the other card she drew with Akashic Record?”

“I activate ‘Oil Drilling’,” Isabel said. “I can return a fire monster from my graveyard to my hand… and since I have not normal summoned this turn I’ll do it now. Prominence Dragon… revive!”

A dragon that looked to be made entirely of flame appeared on the field, licks of fire sprouting from it.

***Prominence Dragon*** *— LV4 Fire Pyro (1500 ATK + 500 = 2000 ATK)*

“I think I know what that facedown is,” Isabel said. “So I’m going to proceed with my battle phase.

Prominence Dragon! Destroy his Giant Virus with Solar Flare!”

The firey dragon roared and shot a blast of molten lava at the Giant Virus, which erupted into a cloud of toxins as it disappeared.

Shougo grumbled as he dropped his solitary card into the cemetery slot. “I place Kuriboh into the cemetery to negate the damage from that attack,” he said. “And I’ll activate Virus’ special effects. First, you take 500 points of damage.”

Isabel winced as the germ cloud surrounded her. Her life points went down to 2100.

***Isabel** — 2600 LP — 500 = 2100 LP*

“And now I’ll summon 2 new Giant Virus cards from my deck,” Shougo said, placing the cards on his duel disk as two more germ clouds appeared.

“You’re hanging on by the skin of your teeth,” Isabel said. “But I’m going to force your hand! Flame Spirit Ignis… attack the Giant Virus! Soul Heater!”

Shougo grumbled. *D… damn it… how did she know?* he grumbled. *I have no choice now.*

“Reverse card open… ‘Mysterious Wok’!” Shougo said, hitting the button to flip the card over. “I’ll sacrifice my Red-Eyes Black Dragon and gain life points equal to its attack points… that’s 2400 more life points for me.”

***Shougo*** *— 150 LP + 2400 = 2550 LP*

Isabel grinned as Ignis’ attack hit its mark. “You were planning to sacrifice your Giant Virus, weren’t you?” she asked. “But now you had to sacrifice your Red-Eyes, otherwise you wouldn’t survive my attack.”

Shougo grit his teeth as Ignis’ fireball destroyed his Giant Virus and his life dropped down to 1050.

***Shougo*** *— 2550 LP — 1500 = 1050 LP*

“Well, you still lose 500 points of damage for destroying my Giant Virus with your attack.”

***Isabel*** *— 2100 LP — 500 = 1600 LP*

“That’s fine,” Isabel said as her own life points dropped to 1600. “I end my turn. And with that, my Prominence Dragon’s effect activates… Hell Blaze!”

The flaming dragon bowed its head and a large lick of flames appeared in front of Shougo. He

guarded himself and winced, and his life points went down to 550.

***Shougo*** *— 1050 LP — 500 = 550 LP*

*I don't know what to do…* he thought to himself. *My ace cards… won't help me. I have five dark monsters in my cemetery so I can't play Dark Armed Dragon. If I draw Dark Angel Zerato, I could summon him, but I can't attack Prominence Dragon so I'll still lose. There's nothing else… nothing else I could do…*

*Impossible! I won't accept this!*

Shougo lowered his eyelids as he heard his own thoughts almost as if they weren't his. He looked at Isabel.

"Well? Hurry up and make your move!" she said, hand on her hip, frowning at her opponent.

*What… what's this feeling?* Shougo thought to himself. *I'm angry again. Just like… wait! Is this the same feeling…?*

Shougo winced and drew a card. He looked at it and gasped.

"Isabel-san," he said. "Before I make my move, I have a question."

“What?”

“What happened to Horiuchi-san…? I didn’t see him in class today.”

Isabel turned up her nose. “Why do you care what happened to a jerk like him?”

“Just tell me!” Shougo shouted.

“I heard he quit Duel Academia last night,” Isabel said. “He just left with his tail between his knees.”

“No…” Shougo muttered. “It’s… it’s the same…”

“Same as what?” Isabel shouted. “Whatever you’re thinking, just stop! Don’t pull a ‘Sailor Moon’ act, pretending you’re concerned with someone who was so cruel to you. He deserves whatever he gets.”

“And what gives you the right to judge him… or me, for that matter?” Shougo said. “He blamed me for his friend leaving. I called him a liar, and I had no right to do that.”

“So what are you saying… that it was true you dueled his silly little friend before he quit, too?”

Isabel scoffed. “I don’t care if you did. They were both elitist Obelisk snotbags.”

“Just stop and listen to yourself! You’re just like they are.”

Isabel grit her teeth. “What did you say?”

“You’re calling them elitist snotbags. How is that any different from them calling us dropout boys?”

“You… have *no* idea what you’re talking about,” Isabel shouted. “Just hurry up and make your play. Or give up — it’s the same thing to me. I can’t believe I ever looked up to you!”

“Fine,” Shougo said. “I play the magic card ‘Pot of Greed’.”

He closed his eyes and touched his deck. *This dark and sickening feeling I have in my stomach right now… if I focus on it, I’m sure I can win this. What’s more…*

He pulled two cards, glanced at them and nodded. “Yes. Because I have Giant Virus, Kuriboh, Red-Eyes and Blood Vorse in the cemetery, I can summon this monster by sacrificing just one dark monster.”

He raised one of the cards in his air and slapped it on his Duel Disk. “Come out, Dark Angel Zerato!”

The Giant Virus shimmered away, and black energy swirled around its area. From the ground came out the armored, dark angelic warrior — jagged blade, vampiric wings and evil grin. He twirled his blade in his hands and entered a battle stance.

***Dark Angel Zerato*** *— LV8 Dark Angel (2800 ATK)*

Chiba adjusted his glasses and glanced at his friend. “Did you see that, Mark?”

“See what?”

“…Nothing. It’s nothing.” Chiba stammered and stayed silent. *I could have sworn I saw some kind of aura around Shougo… but it might have just been my imagination.*

“Fine… so you got that out,” Isabel said. “So what? You can’t attack my Prominence Dragon, so I’ll still win this. I don’t even have to do anything.”

“Unless the other card in my hand is a dark monster,” Shougo said, and flipped the card for Isabel to see — “Newdoria”.

Isabel’s eyes widened. “Impossible! How can you be so lucky?”

Shougo ignored her and placed Newdoria into the graveyard. “Dark Angel Zerato! Destroy Isabel’s monsters… Wicked Light!”

Dark light swirled around Zerato’s sword, and then shot out of it, turning into bright light that shattered Isabel’s Prominence Dragon and Ignis.

Shougo’s expression became one of unequivocal anger. “Now… Zerato! Destroy my opponent… Wicked Wave!”

Zerato rushed Isabel and struck her full on across the chest with his blade. Isabel was thrown back by the force of the attack and fell on her back. The duel was finished.

***Isabel** — 1600 LP — 2800 = 0*

Mark ran to Isabel to help her up. “Are you alright?” he asked in English.

“I… I just hope Shougo understands our feelings now,” Isabel said to Mark. She took his hand and got to her feet. “Shougo, just don’t quit,” she said and walked away.

Shougo just deactivated his duel disk and walked away.

“Awesome, Shougo-kun!” Chiba said and ran to his friend, but Shougo held out his hand to stop him.

“Chiba-kun…” he said. “I’m sorry but I just need you to go back to your dorm room now. There’s something I have to do.”

“Something…?”

“Please.”

Chiba looked at Shougo for a moment, and recalled the dark aura he saw. “Shougo-kun, are you going to be okay?” he asked. “During your duel… I thought I saw…”

“Yeah. You saw it, too… listen. Someone out there is imitating me. Whoever it is… I think he’ll go after Isabel now.”

“Let me go, too,” Chiba said.

“No! No… just… trust me, Chiba-kun, okay?” Shougo’s expression was pleading. “I’ll be fine.”

Chiba sighed and looked down, then back up and nodded his ascent. “Be careful.”

“I will,” Chiba said, and glanced at the direction where Mark and Isabel went. “Go, hurry.”

---

Isabel and Mark split up at the Ra dorm, but Isabel was feeling restless. *That kid… I hoped to beat him, but he ended up making me look foolish,* she thought to herself. *But I can’t accept what he said. I’m just like the Obelisks are? Nonsense…*

These thoughts kept plaguing her, and she finally decided to head outside for some air. She looked in the direction of the ocean as she walked around the Ra dorm grounds. *Those Obelisks… they’re not even as good as us Ras, but they think they’re better because they come from good families? Come on.*

*But he goes and* defends *them?*

“Damn him,” Isabel muttered to no one in particular.

“Are you so sure you want to say that?” a voice in the distance said.

“Who’s there?”

A figure stepped out of the shadows. He looked unmistakably like Shougo, although the expression

on his face looked way more sinister than Isabel thought Shougo capable of. Maybe her words had gotten to him?

Isabel narrowed her eyes. “Shougo… is that you?” she asked. ‘Is it a rematch you want?’ She then chuckled haughtily. “I’m game. If you want to see a beast stronger than Ignis, then you came at the right time…”

Suddenly another figure in the distance pushed Shougo to the ground.

Isabel blinked. “Wh… what?”

Two Shougos were struggling on the ground.

“What’s going on here?”

“I’m sorry, Isabel-san, but I followed you,” Shougo said. “This Shougo is an impostor! He’s the one who dueled Watanabe-san and Horiuchi-san and made them leave the Academia!”

The other Shougo chuckled and turned towards Isabel.. “He’s right,” he said, and suddenly his eyes turned black.

Isabel stammered for a bit, then her eyes rolled back and she fell to the floor, unconscious.

“What did you do to her?” Shougo shouted. “And who are you?”

“I just put her to sleep for a bit,” the doppelganger replied. “I don’t want her to interfere with our battle. As for your second question…”

Black energy whipped around his body, and threw Shougo off of him. He looked up at his clone as he got to his feet. His form turned pitch black and enveloped itself in winds. Shougo thought he could make out the image of Duel Monsters cards making up his body.

The figure them reformed itself — it now looked like a middle-aged man in a form fitting suit wearing sunglasses. His arm looked like it was a duel disk. He gave a menacing grin as he took another step towards Shougo.

“Since I only speak the truth… you may call me Trueman.”

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster, “Flame Spirit Ignis”***
You can sacrifice 1 face-up Fire-attribute monster you control to inflict 100 points of damage to your

opponent for every Fire-attribute monster in your cemetery.

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**Chiba:** “Who the heck is this weirdo, Shougo-kun? Beat him down.”
**Aino:** “The mysterious challenger, ‘Trueman’, who can take the shape of anyone, pulls Aoyama-kun into a ‘Dark Duel’.”
**Shougo:** “That really hurt! What’s going on?!”
**Aino:** “He has no time to think as his challenger hits him with attack after attack.”
**Chiba:** “I really hate cruel jerks like that! Don’t lose, Shougo-kun… we’re all counting on you.”
**Shougo:** “I definitely will not lose here!”
**Aino: “**Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: ‘Shougo’s Shadow Game’**.”
**Katsuki:** “Unbelievable!”

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY ISABEL SUAREZ:

**TECTONIC PLATE RUPTURE**
*Continuous Magic*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, if you

control no monsters you can Special Summon a Level 3 or lower Fire-attribute monster from your Deck. That monster may not attack or be Sacrificed for a Sacrifice Summon on the turn this effect is used. If this card is removed from the field, destroy all cards Special Summoned with this effect.

**MOKUTAN #18 (Charcoal Inpachi)**
*Normal Monster (L1 Fire Pyro, 100/2100)*
A wicked wooden spirit that has burned out. The barbecue grilled with this charcoal is so awesome that everybody thinks it's priceless.

**BLAZING HIITA**
*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Spellcaster, 800/1500)*
Once per turn, you can Sacrifice 1 Fire-attribute monster on your side of the field other than this card to Special Summon 1 Fire-attribute monster from your hand. The monster Special Summoned by this effect is destroyed if "Blazing Hiita" is removed from the field.

**FIRE WING PEGASUS (Firewing Pegasus)**
*Normal Monster (L6 Fire Beast, 2250/1800)*
A heavenly stallion soaring through the skies on crimson wings.

**RAGING FLAME SPIRIT (Raging Flame Sprite)**

*Effect Monster (L3 Fire Pyro, 100/200)*
This card can attack your opponent's Life Points directly. Each time you successfully attack using this effect, this card gains 1000 Attack points.

**KAREIJUTSU "KURENAI" (Spiritual Fire Art — Kurenai)**
*Normal Trap*
Sacrifice 1 Fire-attribute monster on your side of the field to inflict damage to your opponent equal to the original Attack points of the selected monster.

**INVASION OF FLAMES**
*Effect Monster (L3 Fire Pyro, 1300/1200)*
When this card is Normal Summoned successfully, no Trap Cards can be activated.

**FLAME SPIRIT IGNIS**
*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Pyro, 1500/1200)*
You can Sacrifice 1 Fire-attribute monster on your side of the field. Then, inflict 100 points of damage to your opponent for each Fire-attribute monster in your cemetery.

**BURNING BLOOD (Molten Destruction)**
*Field Magic*
Raise the Attack power of all Fire-attribute monsters by 500 points, and lower their Defense power by 400 points.

**AKASHIC RECORD**

*Normal Magic*

Pick up 2 cards from the top of your deck and show them to your opponent. If either of the picked-up cards has been played previously in the current Duel, remove both cards from play. Otherwise, add the cards to your hand.

**PROMINENCE DRAGON (Solar Flare Dragon)**

*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Pyro, 1500/1000)*

While you control another Pyro-type monster, this card cannot be the target of an attack. Inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent during the End Phase of your turn.

**OIL DRILLING (Oil)**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 Fire-attribute monster in your cemetery and add it to your hand.

**FIRE BACK (Fire Recovery)**

*Normal Magic*

Discard 1 Fire-attribute monster in your hand to the cemetery, and Special Summon 1 Fire-attribute monster from your cemetery to the field.

**FIRE TROOPER**

*Effect Monster (L3 Fire Warrior, 1000/1000)*

When this card is Summoned, you can send it to the cemetery to inflict 1000 points of damage to your opponent.

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CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**DARK WORLD DEALINGS**

*Normal Magic*

Both players draw 1 card from their decks and then discard 1 card from their hand.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON (Red-Eyes B. Dragon)**

*Normal Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*

A ferocious dragon with a deadly attack.

**DARK ZONE (Mystic Plasma Zone)**

*Field Magic*

Raise the ATK of all Dark-attribute monsters by 500 points, and lower their DEF by 400 points.

**BLOOD VORSE (Vorse Raider)**

*Normal Monster (L4 Dark Beast-Warrior, 1900/1200)*

This wicked Beast-Warrior does every horrid thing imaginable and loves it! His axe bears the marks of his countless victims.

**LEGITIMATE LINEAGE (Birthright)**
*Continuous Trap*
Select 1 Normal Monster in your cemetery and Special Summon it in face-up Attack position. When this card is removed from the field, destroy that monster. When the selected monster is removed from the field, destroy this card.

**GIANT VIRUS (Giant Germ)**
*Effect Monster (L2 Dark Demon, 1000/100)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent. You may also Special Summon up to 2 “Giant Virus” Cards from your Deck in Attack Position.

**MYSTERIOUS WOK (Mystik Wok)**
*Instant Magic*
Sacrifice 1 monster and gain Life Points equal to either its attack or defense points.

**POT OF GREED**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**DARK ANGEL ZERATO (Darklord Zerato)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Angel, 2800/2300)*
If there are 4 or more Dark-attribute monsters with different names in your Graveyard, you can Normal

Summon this monster by sacrificing 1 Dark-attribute monster. You can send 1 Dark-attribute monster from your hand to the cemetery to destroy all monsters your opponent controls. If you activate this effect, destroy this card during the End Phase of this turn.

**NEWDORIA**

*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*

When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, destroy 1 monster on the field.

# 14. Shougo's Shadow Game

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*The non-original characters in this fanfiction are copyrighted to Kazuki Takahashi, Studio Gallup and Toei where applicable. All other characters are considered public domain by the author and may be used freely, but he does request that you ask permission as a courtesy.*

*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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"Damn him," Isabel muttered to no one in particular.

"Are you so sure you want to say that?" a voice in the distance said.

Isabel narrowed her eyes. "Shougo… is that you?" she asked.

Suddenly another figure in the distance pushed Shougo to the ground.

“I’m sorry, Isabel-san, but I followed you,” Shougo said. “This Shougo is an impostor! He’s the one who dueled Watanabe and Horiuchi and made them leave the Academia!”

The other Shougo chuckled and turned towards Isabel.. “He’s right,” he said, and suddenly his eyes turned black.

Isabel stammered for a bit, then her eyes rolled back and she fell to the floor, unconscious.

“What did you do to her?” Shougo shouted. “And who are you?”

“I just put her to sleep for a bit,” the doppelganger replied. “I don’t want her to interfere with our battle. As for your second question…”

Black energy whipped around his body, and threw Shougo off of him. He looked up at his clone as he got to his feet. His form turned pitch black and enveloped itself in winds. Shougo thought he could make out the image of Duel Monsters cards making up his body.

The figure them reformed itself — it now looked like a middle-aged man in a form fitting suit wearing sunglasses. His arm looked like it was a duel disk.

He gave a menacing grin as he took another step towards Shougo.

“Since I only speak the truth… you may call me Trueman.”

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
**Turn Fourteen: “Shougo’s Shadow Game”**

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“Trueman…?” Shougo mumbled, and backed up another step.

“Now, now, where do you think you’re going?” Trueman said. “There is no place to run to.” He then snapped his fingers, and the Ra dorm, and everything around them, disappeared.

“What’s happening?!” Shougo shouted.

“We’re going to duel is what’s happening,” Trueman replied, and raised his arm. It began to glow, as if it were activating like a duel disk.

“A… a duel?”

“Yes. This is what is called a Dark Duel,” Trueman explained. “It is like a regular duel, but the consequences of your mistakes are more severe. You shall see what I speak of.”

Shougo looked around at his new surroundings, which were — non-existant. He was standing on something — he could feel a floor under his feet — but the world seemed to be made of shifting lights. The atmosphere was oppressive, and Shougo had to struggle to breathe.

“Don’t panic,” Trueman chuckled. “You’re at home here. This is where you belong — in the shadows. After all, you—”

“Shut up!” Shougo shouted reflexively, not wanting to hear what this strange man had to say.

Trueman chuckled. “Very well,” he said. “We suspected you would not yet be ready to hear this. When you lose, you will comprehend all, but in the meantime…”

His form became darkness again, the form of cards shuffling around his body. When the cards stopped moving and the dark energy faded, he had once again taken the form of Shougo.

“To destroy your destitute illusions with this form… would serve my purposes best,” he said, and then sneered a bit. “Now… raise your weapon and duel me!”

Shougo’s mind was racing, but his body was already moving itself, getting ready for a duel. “I…” he muttered. “I am definitely not going to lose. Not here.”

Their disks activated.

“Duel!” they both shouted.

***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP*
***Trueman*** *— 4000 LP*

“You can have the first move,” the doppelganger said.

“Okay,” Shougo said. “Then I’ll draw.” For the first time he could remember, though, he was unsure of himself while dueling. He was in a bad situation. He was not in control. And worst of all, Shougo was afraid.

He glanced at his hand. *Fortunately,* he thought to himself. *I’m at least having okay luck.*

“I set one monster card, and two more cards. Turn end.”

Trueman gave a malicious grin. “Very good, as expected of you. But, you are not near your potential. My turn. Draw, and at this moment I activate the effect of Dark Grepher.”

“Dark Grepher?” Shougo repeated. This is a card he’d never heard of.

“By discarding a high level Dark monster from my hand,” Trueman explained. “I will special summon this card from my hand. So I send Dark Angel Zerato to the cemetery. Come out, Dark Grepher!”

A warrior monster came out of the ground. It looked similar to a card Shougo knew of, “Warrior Dai Grepher”. But its colors were totally dark and it bore an evil smile on its face as it wielded its sword.

***Dark Grepher*** *— LV4 Dark Warrior (1700 ATK)*

“Now, Dark Grepher’s other ability activates,” Trueman said. “From my hand I’ll also discard Wicked Emperor Gaius to search my deck for a dark monster to send to the cemetery as well.”

He fanned his deck out, and selected the card “Dark Magician of Chaos”.

Shougo briefly puzzled over this before he realized what his lookalike's intent was. "Could it be…?" he murmured.

"You figured it out," Trueman said. "With three Dark monsters in my cemetery, I can special summon your ultimate dragon… show yourself! Dark Armed Dragon!"

Shougo had never been in the situation of having to confront that monster himself. When it appeared on Trueman's field to oppose Shougo, he felt a sharp twinge of fright.

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

"Now you see the terrible situation you're in," Trueman said, taking another card from his hand. "But, the worst is yet to come. I use my regular summon this turn on Knight of the End in attack mode."

The shadowy armored soldier appeared on the field, and Shougo bit his lip. That card gave his opponent yet another chance to discard.

***Knight of the End*** *— LV4 Dark Warrior (1400 ATK)*

“I place D-HERO Diabolicguy from my deck to the grave,” the false Shougo said, his face bearing an even larger sneer.

“D… Destiny Heroes?” Shougo said in disbelief.

“And next, I activate the magic card… ‘Soul Absorption’. Now, pay attention… here is where it gets fun.” With mirth that the apparition had not shown so far, the Shougo lookalike chuckled madly as he made his next play. “I remove ‘D-HERO Diabolicguy’ from my grave, to summon another one from my deck in attack mode!”

The devil-like figure appeared on the field, roaring.

***D-HERO Diabolicguy*** *— LV6 Dark Warrior (800 ATK)*

And as it did, energy seemed to radiate from the deck and enter Trueman’s body, raising his life points up to 4500.

***Trueman*** *— 4000 LP + 500 = 4500 LP*

Shougo bit his lip. *Soul Absorption lets the player gain 500 life points every time a card is removed from play,* he thought. *And with his Dark Armed Dragon on the field…*

Trueman completed his thought. “I’ll now destroy your cards and gain lifepoints for myself. Isn’t this a terrific plan? But you know that better than I do, Aoyama Shougo. You’ve thought of this yourself, haven’t you?”

Shougo’s eyes widened.

“But…?” the doppelganger went on. “You are too kind to use it? It’s unfair? These are nonsensical thoughts created by that false image of yourself that you have. You’re kind? You aren’t cruel? Dispose of these unnecessary things.”

He then ordered the Dark Armed Dragon. “Destroy all of his cards with Dark Genocide!” The images of the Wicked Emperor Gaius, Dark Magician of Chaos and Dark Angel Zerato briefly shimmered onto the field before evaporating into dark energy that channeled into the dragon’s arms. It then hurled that energy against Shougo’s field.

His facedown cards, Drain Shield, Phantom of Darkness and Killer Tomato were destroyed in one fell swoop. At the same time, Trueman’s life points rose by 1500 because of the ‘Soul Absorption’ card. His lifepoints were now at 6000.

***Trueman*** *— 4500 LP + 1500 = 6000 LP*

“And now, Aoyama Shougo… you will feel the true horror of a Dark Game. D-HERO Diabolicguy — attack his lifepoints directly.”

Diabolicguy hopped forward and then launched a head dive attack against Shougo. An audible crunching sound could be heard as Shougo fell onto his back, barely holding onto his cards as his life dropped to 3200.

***Shougo*** *— 4000 LP — 800 = 3200 LP*

He staggered onto his feet, coughing. “I… I felt that!” he muttered.

“That’s right,” his opposite said. “All the pain inflicted to you during this game… it is not just a powerful illusion. It is real! A fact which my Knight of the End is all to eager to demonstrate!”

“Wait!” Shougo shouted, but it was too late. The knight had already approached him and executed a fierce slash against his chest. While Shougo’s body was not damaged, he mentally felt every aspect of the attack and shouted in pain, clutching his staggering heart. His life points were at 1800 now.

***Shougo*** *— 3200 LP — 1400 = 1800 LP*

His opponent was pitiless. “Dark Grepher!”

The towering warrior had his turn against Shougo, striking him with an air-directed slash that sent him to the ground. He could barely think; the pain had overwhelmed his body. But in the back of his head, he knew the finishing blow was coming.

***Shougo*** *— 1800 LP — 1700 = 100 LP*

And Trueman did not hesitate at all to deliver it. “Dark Armed Dragon… end the match.”

The Dark Armed Dragon roared and wound up for its signature punch attack. But when it was about to strike, dozens of small furry creatures launched themselves out of Shougo’s duel disk and took the blow for him.

“I… discard Kuriboh… from my hand,” Shougo said as he got to his feet.

Trueman chuckled. “I see. Even in your weakened state, you could still think about saving yourself,” he observed. “You’re good at surviving, which is why you were such an appropriate choice for him.”

“‘Him’? W… who?”

“Never mind that now,” he replied. “My turn’s over.”

Shougo faltered in his steps as he continued to struggle to stand up straight. He clutched his chest and coughed again. The attacks against him… he still felt the pain. It wasn't like a regular duel. But his opponent had told him that from the start.

"Draw," Shougo muttered. "I play 'Pot of Greed', and draw two cards." He winced and did so. He then looked at his hand. *I can't win with this*, he thought to himself. *But I can do some damage. It's risky… but I have to take the chance.*

"I activate the magic card 'Fusion'," Shougo announced. "I send Red-Eyes Black Dragon and Meteor Dragon from my hand to the cemetery to summon my most powerful monster, Meteor Black Dragon!"

Shougo bit his lip as the familiar molten monster that had helped him through many other pinches appeared on the field and roared.

***Meteor Black Dragon*** *— LV8 Fire Dragon (3500 ATK)*

"Meteor Black Dragon…" Shougo pooled all his strength together and clenched his fist, then pointed at his opponent's field. "Destroy his Dark Armed Dragon!"

The lava dragon roared and prepared to spit out a fireball.

“Dark Burning Meteor!”

A blast of blazing fire caused Dark Armed Dragon to be destroyed. Shougo’s doppelganger winced a bit as his life points dropped to 5300.

***Trueman** — 6000 LP — 700 = 5300 LP*

“That useless old dragon,” he muttered. “For you to damage me with it…”

“That’s not all!” Shougo said. “I play ‘Fusion Cancel’ from my hand, splitting my Meteor Black Dragon into its two parts… Red-Eyes Black Dragon! Meteor Dragon!”

The two dragons appeared on the field, and Shougo felt his strength coming back.

***Meteor Dragon** — LV5 Earth Dragon (1800 ATK)*
***Red-Eyes Black Dragon** — LV7 Dark Dragon (2400 ATK)*

His body was still in pain, but he felt more confident. Whoever this Trueman was, he wouldn’t shake his faith that easily.

“Meteor Dragon! Destroy Dark Grepher!” Shougo ordered. “Burning Meteor!”

The space dragon shot another smoking fireball at the evil warrior, destroying it and dropping Trueman’s life points.

***Trueman*** *— 5300 LP — 100 = 5200 LP*

“Finally, Red-Eyes Black Dragon will take out your Destiny Hero. Dark Mega Flare!” The legendary dragon destroyed Diabolic with a blazing flash of power, and Trueman’s points dropped below the 4000 mark again, ending at 3600.

***Trueman*** *— 5200 LP — 1600 = 3600 LP*

“Turn end,” Shougo said. *There. Let’s see you come back from that. Nothing in your hand… and you can’t use ‘Monster Reincarnation’ to bring back Dark Armed Dragon.*

His alter ego just chuckled. “That’s the spirit, Aoyama Shougo,” he said. “Feel your frustration at the pain I’ve inflicted to you and hurt me back! My turn… draw!”

Trueman glanced at his one card. “I activate ‘Bitter Choice’,” he said. “I pick five cards in my

deck and show them to you. You pick one to go in my hand, and the rest go to my cemetery. Go!”

The images of five cards appeared — Android Psycho Shocker, the spell cards Earth Crush and Raise Dead.. and two Dark Armed Dragons!

“Wh… what?” Shougo shouted. “You have *three* Dark Armed Dragons?”

“Of course,” Trueman replied. “I am standing here representing the you that you want to be. Now… hurry and pick a card. Any card.” He sneered again.

*If he had those in his deck… why do this? If I picked Dark Armed Dragon, he wouldn’t be able to summon it because his grave would have more than three dark monsters. What… are you up to?*

“I’m going to pick Dark Armed Dragon,” Shougo said.

“Very well,” the other Shougo said. “Dark Armed goes to my hand, the other cards go to my grave. I will switch Knight of the End to defense mode and end my turn.”

***Knight of the End*** *(1200 DEF)*

*So… he really does have nothing*, Shougo thought, still uncertain of himself as he reached for his deck.

“Meteor Dragon… destroy his Knight of the End. Red-Eyes, direct attack!”

Trueman shielded himself as the Knight was shattered by Meteor Dragon’s attack, and then audibly yelled at the impact of Red-Eyes’ Dark Mega Flare. His lifepoints were down to 1200.

***Trueman*** *— 3600 LP — 2400 = 1200 LP*

“My turn’s over,” Shougo said. “If I win, what will happen? Will I leave this place?”

“That’s up to you, of course,” Trueman replied, drawing a card. “But don’t get ahead of yourself. First I have to rid you of that cherished phantom image you have of yourself.”

“You keep saying that! I know who I am!”

Trueman laughed out loud. “That,” he said. “Is the biggest lie any human has ever said. I set one monster card facedown. Turn end.”

“Whatever,” Shougo grumbled. “Just get me out of here after I win this. My turn… draw! Red-Eyes… attack his facedown monster!”

Red-Eyes' fireball attack revealed a black clothed ghoul with a jagged sword — a Night Assassin.

***Night Assassin*** *— LV3 Dark Demon (500 DEF)*

"So sorry, Aoyama Shougo," Trueman said. "Night Assassin's flip effect activates. I can destroy one monster on the field, so I will destroy your Meteor Dragon!"

The figure shimmered away and then re-appeared behind Meteor Dragon, slicing its hologram into pieces.

Shougo muttered to himself. "I set one card. Turn end."

"My turn," his double said. "Draw! Magic card, 'Allure of Darkness', activate. You know how this works, don't you? I draw two cards, then I remove one Dark monster in my hand from play. And I'll remove… the Dark Armed Dragon you gave me!"

The card disappeared from his hand as Trueman gained 500 life points due to the effect of Soul Absorption.

***Trueman*** *— 1200 LP + 500 = 1700 LP*

"What? But… why?"

“You’ve been so afraid of your own ace monster you failed to realize my true plan,” Trueman replied. “I summon Dark King Prometheus to the field.”

An orange-hooded demon with a body that looked to be made of shadows and electricity materialized on the field. His face carefully hidden by the darkness created by the cloak, Shougo nevertheless seemed to recognize him…

***Dark King Prometheus*** *— LV4 Dark Demon (1200 ATK)*

“You know who that is, don’t you?” the other Shougo smirked. “You can’t put your finger on it though… not yet, of course. For now, I activate Prometheus’ special ability. I’ll remove all the Dark-attribute monsters in my graveyard from play, powering him up by 400 points each.”

Card images appeared behind Prometheus — two Dark Armed Dragons, Android Psycho Shocker, Dark Grepher, Night Assassin, Knight of the End and Diabolicguy — before they shimmered into dark energy which hit his chest. His attack power rose to…

***Dark King Prometheus*** *— 1200 ATK + 2800 = 4000 ATK*

“4000?!” Shougo choked.

“That’s not all,” Trueman said. “Because of ‘Soul Absorption’, I’ll regain life by 500 for each card removed. So as you see, you never had a chance to begin with.” He chuckled morbidly as his life rose to 5200.

***Trueman*** *— 1700 LP + 3500 = 5200 LP*

Shougo backed up a step, but in his mind, he wasn’t really afraid. *He can attack if he wants*, he thought to himself. *My facedown card is ‘Holy Barrier — Mirror Force’. Next turn, I’ll use my Red-Eyes to defeat him. I refuse to lose here.*

“And now I play the magic card, ‘Dimension Fusion’. Pay attention, Aoyama Shougo, because you will remember this in the next world! By paying 2000 of my life points, we both can summon cards that were removed from play. However, if my recollection is correct… you haven’t removed anything!”

Now Shougo was genuinely afraid.

Trueman winced as his life dropped.

***Trueman*** *— 5200 LP — 2000 = 3200 LP*

“I have four free slots,” he said. “I will summon… Dark Angel Zerato, Gaius the Wicked Emperor and Dark Magician of Chaos.”

All three creatures rose on the field as he announced their names. Zerato and Dark Magician all had 2800 life points while Gaius was slightly weaker at 2400.

***Dark Angel Zerato*** *— LV8 Dark Angel (2800 ATK)*
***Wicked Emperor Gaius*** *— LV6 Dark Demon (2400 ATK)*
***Dark Magician of Chaos*** *— LV8 Dark Spellcaster (2800 ATK)*

Trueman gave his most evil sneer of all. “And the last monster I’ll summon… Android Psycho Shocker!”

***Android — Psycho Shocker*** *— LV6 Dark Machine (2400 ATK)*

*Oh no!* Shougo thought. *With him on the field… I can’t use my trap!*

“That’s not all! Dark Magician of Chaos lets me gather a magic card from my cemetery and put it in my hand. I choose Earth Crush, and use it to destroy Red-Eyes Black Dragon!”

The clone slapped the card on his duel disk and narrowed his eyes.

“Disappear, you weak image,” he muttered.

The ground rippled underneath Shougo’s dragon, causing its hologram to shatter.

“My Red-Eyes…” Shougo whimpered helplessly.

“You have no time to mourn for that weak beast,” Trueman reminded him. “All of my monsters will now attack you directly! And now is a good time to tell you the cost of defeat in this place!”

All five monsters readied their magical attacks.

“The price of weakness… is death.”

And then all their attacks struck Shougo at once.

***Shougo*** *— 100 LP — 14400 = 0*

He cried like a wounded beast as his life points vanished, and he dropped to the floor, body smoking.

“Be stronger in your next life,” Trueman said as the form he had taken once again faded to black. “Your future demands it!”

And the rest was silence…

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Isabel stirred slowly, getting up off the ground in front of the Ra Yellow dorms. “Who dropped the house on me?” she mumbled as she rubbed her head.

She then saw Shougo on the ground, looking much worse off than she. His cards were spilled across the ground.

“Shougo?” Isabel shouted, but Shougo didn’t answer. She ran to him, and saw that his body appeared to be smoking. “Shougo! Hang in there!”

Shougo opened his eyes briefly and glanced at Isabel, then his eyes rolled back and he fell unconscious again.

“Shougo! Someone help him… Shougo!”

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster, “Dark King Prometheus”***
When this monster is normal summoned, you can remove any number of Dark-attribute monsters in your cemetery from play. For each monster removed, it will gain 400 attack points until the end of your turn.

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**Chiba:** “Please be okay, Shougo-kun!”
**Aino:** “Aoyama-kun somehow survives his ‘Dark Duel’ and is placed under the care of the medical office. Tenjouin-sensei, however, has had enough of the secrecy and goes to the Chancellor for answers.”
**Tenjouin:** “How can I be expected to my job if I can’t even protect one of my students?”
**Aino:** “Kiyotaki-kouchou, however, decides now is the time to be candid and reveals all he knows.”
**Tenjouin:** “Wait a minute, Aino-san… how do you know any of this?”
**Aino:** “*Hi… mi… tsu*. Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *‘The Never-Ending Battle! The Will to Fight*’.”
**Tenjouin:** “Actually, Aino-san, I really do want to know how a student knows more about the goings on of a school than a teacher…”

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**DRAIN SHIELD (Draining Shield)**
*Normal Trap*

Negate the attack of 1 of your opponent's monsters and gain Life Points equal to its ATK.

**PHANTOM OF DARKNESS (Dark Illusion)**
*Counter Trap*
Negate the activation of a Magic Card, Trap Card or Effect Monster that targets a face-up Dark-attribute Monster, and destroy that card.

**KILLER TOMATO (Mystic Tomato)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Plant, 1400/1100)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, you may Special Summon 1 Dark-attribute monster with 1500 ATK or less from your Deck in Attack Position.

**KURIBOH**
*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Demon, 300/200)*
When your opponent attacks you during their Battle Phase, you may discard this card from your hand to make the Battle Damage from that attack 0.

**POT OF GREED**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**FUSION (Polymerization)**
*Normal Magic*
Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion

Monster card from your hand or side of the field to the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck.

**METEOR DRAGON**
*Normal Monster (L5 Earth Dragon, 1800/2000)*
This dragon appeared from the sky and crashed to the earth.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON (Red-Eyes B. Dragon)**
*Normal Monster (L7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
A ferocious dragon with a deadly attack.

**METEOR BLACK DRAGON (Meteor B. Dragon)**
*Fusion Monster (L8 Fire Dragon, 3500/2000)*
"Red-Eyes Black Dragon" + "Meteor Dragon"

**FUSION CANCEL (De-Fusion)**
*Instant Magic*
Return 1 Fusion Monster on the field to its owner's Fusion deck. In addition, if the Fusion-Material Monsters exist in your cemetery, you may Special Summon those monsters to the field.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an

attack. Destroy all Attack Position monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

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CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA DOPPELGANGER (TRUEMAN)

**DARK ANGEL ZERATO (Darklord Zerato)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Angel, 2800/2300)*
If there are 4 or more Dark-attribute monsters with different names in your Graveyard, you can Normal Summon this monster by sacrificing 1 Dark-attribute monster. You can send 1 Dark-attribute monster from your hand to the cemetery to destroy all monsters your opponent controls. If you activate this effect, destroy this card during the End Phase of this turn.

**DARK GREPHER**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Warrior, 1700/1600)*
You can discard 1 Level 5 or higher Dark-attribute monster to Special Summon this card from your hand. Once per turn, you can discard 1 Dark-attribute monster to send 1 Dark-attribute monster from your Deck to the cemetery.

**WICKED EMPEROR GAIUS (Caius the Shadow Monarch)**

*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Demon, 2400/1000)*
When this card is summoned with a sacrifice, remove from play 1 card on the field. If the card is a Dark-attribute Monster, inflict 1000 points of damage to your opponent.

**DARK MAGICIAN OF CHAOS**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Spellcaster, 2800/2600)*
When this card is Normal or Special Summoned, you can select 1 Magic card in your cemetery and add it to your hand. Monsters this card destroys in battle are removed from play instead of being sent to the cemetery. If this face-up card is removed from the field, it is removed from play.

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

**KNIGHT OF THE END (Armageddon Knight)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Warrior, 1400/1200)*
When this card is Summoned, you can send 1 Dark-attribute Monster from your Deck to the cemetery.

**D-HERO DIABOLICGUY (Destiny Hero — Malicious)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Warrior, 800/800)*
By removing this card in your cemetery from play, select 1 “D-HERO Diabolicguy” from your Deck and Special Summon it.

**SOUL ABSORPTION**
*Continuous Magic*
Each time a card is removed from play, raise your Life Points by 500 for each card removed from play.

**BITTER CHOICE (Painful Choice)**
*Normal Magic*
Select 5 cards from your Deck and reveal them to your opponent. Your opponent chooses 1 card among them. Add that card to your hand, and discard the remaining cards to your cemetery.

**ANDROID — PSYCHO SHOCKER (Jinzo)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Machine, 2400/1500)*
Trap Cards cannot be activated and the effects of all face-up Trap Cards are negated.

**EARTH CRUSH (Smashing Ground)**
*Normal Magic*
Destroy 1 monster on your opponent’s side of the field with the highest Defense points. (If it’s a tie, you get to choose.)

**RAISE DEAD (Monster Reborn)**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 monster from either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

**ALLURE OF DARKNESS**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 2 cards from your deck. Remove 1 Dark-attribute monster in your hand from play. If you cannot do this, discard your entire hand.

**NIGHT ASSASSIN (Night Assailant)**
*Effect Monster (L3 Dark Demon, 200/500)*
FLIP: Select 1 monster on your opponent's side of the field and destroy it. When this monster is sent directly from your hand to the cemetery, select 1 Flip-Effect Monster in your cemetery other than this card and place it in your hand.

**DARK KING PROMETHEUS (Prometheus, King of the Shadows)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*
When this card is Normal Summoned, you can remove from play any number of Dark-attribute monsters in your cemetery. For each card removed by this effect, this card gains 400 Attack points until the end of the turn

**DIMENSION FUSION**

*Normal Magic*

Pay 2000 Life Points. Both players Special Summon as many of their removed from play monsters as possible.

# 15. The NeverEnding Battle!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 — (.)**
***Turn Fifteen: "The Never-Ending Battle! The Will to Fight"***

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Asuka Tenjouin was in the medic's office where Shougo lay attached to medical monitors. "What's wrong with him, Ayukawa-sensei?"

Emi Ayukawa was previously the head of the female dormitories of Obelisk Blue, back when Obelisk was the only destination for female duelists. When Kiyotaki made the dorms co-op, Ayukawa retained her position as the head school nurse. And while her hair was now pulled to the side and she bore a few wrinkles, she had overall aged very well.

“I know we’re colleagues now, but it’s hard not to think of you as ‘sensei’,” Tenjouin said and smiled slightly. She then looked at Shougo and frowned again.

“I can’t identify what’s wrong with him,” Ayukawa said. “His vitals make it appear as though he’s sustained some damage to his body, but I can’t find any wounds. His temperature is higher than normal, and he doesn’t respond to outside stimuli.”

“Something happened,” Isabel said desperately. “I don’t really remember what happened but… I know Shougo-san helped me from someone! He did this to protect me. I… wish I could remember more. I really do.”

Tenjouin bit her lip hard. *I can’t believe I actually suspected him of being involved with the quitting students*, she thought. *I’ve had enough of the*

*secrecy. I'm going to go see Kiyotaki-san and find out what exactly is going on here!*

---

At around the same time, a boat was pulling into the harbor of Duel Academia island. Hinata Toragami, flanked with two bodyguards, was returning to the school. Her friends, Aino and Katsuki, were waiting for her when she arrived.

"Welcome back, Toragami-sama!" Katsuki said.

"I received your schoolwork and turned it in as requested," Aino reported.

"Thank you both," Toragami said as she got off the boat. The guards stayed on the boat and drove it away as she started to enter the school grounds.

"Did your business go smoothly?" Katsuki asked as they walked.

"It went as expected," Toragami replied. "And things here?"

Aino glanced at Katsuki, who gave her a glare. Aino decided it best not to mention Katsuki's loss to the American student for now.

“Where is Aoyama Shougo?”

“Eh?” Katsuki said. “You want to know how that guy is doing?”

Toragami narrowed her eyes, which caused Katsuki to stammer.

“He’s in the medical office,” Aino said. “Something happened to him last night… he’s unconscious.”

Toragami’s eyes widened… and there was an expression Aino had not seen in them in a very long time.

“Please remind me,” she said to Aino. “After class, I’ll need to visit the medical office.”

---

Chancellor Kiyotaki looked up from his desk to see Asuka Tenjouin staring at him with daggers coming through her eyes.

“May I help you?” he asked, dispensing with asking her how she got in his office.

“I want to hear the truth from you, Kiyotaki-kochou,” Tenjouin said. “No more games! Aoyama-

kun is in the infirmary and we don’t know what’s wrong with him. But I know you know something.”

“Tenjouin-san…” Kiyotaki said, appearing to be bemused. “You’re compromising your professionalism.”

“I don’t care!” Tenjouin shouted. ‘As the head professor of the highest ranking dormitory I’ve made it my job to care for all students, and I can’t do it if I don’t know what’s happening to them.’ She looked down and tried to hide her powerless tears. “So please… please…”

“Calm yourself, Tenjouin Asuka,” Kiyotaki said. “I’ll tell you what you need to know.”

Tenjouin looked up.

Kiyotaki shuffled his papers and then glanced up at Tenjouin.

“You are familiar with the Darkness incident from 15 years ago, yes?”

“Darkness?” Tenjouin’s eyes widened. “How do you know about that?”

“You’re familiar, then?” Kiyotaki repeated himself.

“Y… yes… but that was a long time ago. How do *you* know about that?”

Kiyotaki turned towards the window. “What I’m going to tell you… does not leave this room. Once you exit my office, you officially have no knowledge of any of it. Are we clear?”

“I don’t know if I can make that promise,” Tenjouin said. “If any of your information can help Aoyama-kun, I have to share it.”

“I wouldn’t ask you to make this promise if I had that kind of information,” Kiyotaki said. “All I can do is shed some light on what is happening.”

Tenjouin sighed. “You’re my superior, so I really have no choice in the matter, do I?”

---

Chiba was standing a vigil for his friend. It was the first thing he did when he heard what had happened to him.

He wrung his hands tight. “I should have gone with him,” he said aloud.

“It wouldn’t have helped,” Isabel said. “I was there, and I couldn’t help him either.”

“I just can’t believe this happened,” Chiba said. “Shougo-kun’s my friend.”

Isabel rubbed the back of her head. “You know, I was really angry at this kid just six hours ago. I wanted to beat the tar out of him. And now… ugh. I feel awful about myself.”

Chiba thought back to the duel Shougo had with Isabel, and that momentary flash of energy… almost an aura, that he had seen coming from Shougo’s deck. At the time, he’d passed it off as just the night playing tricks but now it seemed relevant.

But what could he do about it?

“You should probably go find Mark and tell him what happened, Isabel-san,” Chiba said. “He’ll want to know.”

“I… yes,” Isabel said and left.

Chiba wrung his hands again and watched the machines connected to Shougo. *Fight, Shougo-kun… hurry back to us!*

---

Tenjouin was still standing and Kiyotaki was still facing the window.

“I come from an organization that has been monitoring the island that Duel Academia is on,” he said.

“Organization?”

“The organization I come from monitors supernatural activity,” he went on. “We have learned a bit about the creature called Darkness that appeared on this island. It gained a substantial bit of power and threatened to eradicate the world. More to the point, it absorbed the energy of almost every living thing in this universe. It did this through a power we call ‘despair’.”

“How did you find all of this out?” Tenjouin asked.

“Records of people were wiped for a period of time from everywhere on Earth,” Kiyotaki said. “For awhile, no one existed. And then, the records were restored. By virtue of this blank period, we have been able to gather some clues.”

He turned towards Tenjouin and opened a folder that contained a list of names.

“When Darkness was defeated, there were certain names that did not return.”

“What?”

“The entire world was under the thrall of Darkness, including the members of our organization. It would be understandable for us to dismiss the mission of comprehending its power as impossible, but it is nevertheless unacceptable. Darkness is a threat to mankind, and we must seal it away.”

Tenjouin sat down at last and put her hand to her chin. “Darkness… I suppose you know, then, about how it took over my brother.”

“We know it requires a vessel. We do not have information on who it used. All we have to go on is the list of names we have. As I told you before, there were some that did not return. However, one of the names on that list is of particular import.”

He pointed Tenjouin to the name on the list, and Tenjouin gasped in shock. “It… can’t be…”

“It is,” Kiyotaki said. “Aoyama Shougo, aged 24 years, was among the human beings that did not return.”

---

Chiba had fallen asleep on his vigil; he had missed his classes. He wanted to be there when his friend woke up.

But he came to with a start when he heard people moving around in the room. He looked up and saw Hinata Toragami and Shiho Katsuki in the room.

“What?!” he said, which caused Katsuki and Toragami to turn towards him. “What are *you* doing there?”

“Who do you think you are, addressing Toragami-sama that way?!” Katsuki shouted.

“What, it’s not enough that you humiliated him, now you have to gloat over his misery?” Chiba yelled, getting off of his chair. “I don’t care if you own all of Japan, get out!”

“You don’t understand, Chiba-san,” Toragami said.

Chiba did a double take. “What?”

Toragami didn’t say another word, just stared intently at Chiba. He looked down, suddenly embarassed. “Sorry… Toragami-san.”

“Don’t be sorry. You have every right to resent me. I destroyed your friend in a duel. But you

understand — that's war. Don't you?"

"W… war?"

Toragami turned her eyes away. "Chiba Katsurou… don't think I don't understand the reason why you're here. You should know better than anyone… a duel is no different from a battle. And a rivalry is no different from a war."

"Toragami-san!" Chiba said indignantly. "I think of Shougo-kun as a rival too, but that doesn't mean we can't be friends."

Toragami crossed her arms tighter and frowned more deeply.

"Don't you have a class to be at?" Katsuki asked somewhat contemptuously.

Chiba gasped and looked at his watch. "Please excuse me!" he said hurriedly as he ran out the door.

Toragami just stared on with a seemingly dire expression on her face.

*Aoyama Shougo… what kind of rival can you hope to be for me if you die here?*

---

“When an applicant named Aoyama Shougo, aged fourteen, applied to Duel Academia, the organization was of course curious,” Kiyotaki said. “And I happened to have had been the lead professor here for two years by then. So, naturally, they called on me to observe this boy.”

“What are you saying, exactly?” Tenjouin said. “That Aoyama-kun is… is connected to ‘Darkness’ somehow? That’s impossible!”

“Can you really say that anything is impossible, Tenjouin-san?” Kiyotaki said, crossing his hands together and lowering his head. “In the time *you* spent on this island as a student, the world was nearly led to destruction four times. And on one occasion, you were helping the enemy do it.”

“Kiyotaki-kouchou!” Tenjouin shouted.

“Don’t misunderstand me,” Kiyotaki replied, putting his hands down. “We are familiar with that power as well. In fact, we have substantially more information on the Light of Ruin than of Darkness, since the former used several public figures to assist it on its quest.”

“The Light of Ruin…” Tenjouin was uncomfortable repeating what she was hearing, but it

was a lot to take in.

“Yes… we fear that the Light of Ruin has returned as well.”

“What?” Tenjouin felt fear grip her heart. “Why? Why all of a sudden?”

“We don’t know,” Kiyotaki replied. “I only know that my organization has detected signs that it’s returned. But… we fear the worst.”

Tenjouin got up out of her chair. “If you knew this, then why did you let Aoyama-kun enroll? Isn’t it dangerous to let him in this school? Don’t you find it a tad irresponsible th—”

“Do *not* talk to me of responsibility, Tenjouin Asuka,” Kiyotaki said, suddenly speaking in an angry, firm tone of voice. “What about the Chancellor that sat in this chair when you were coming here? Did not Samejima-san take many, many chances with his own students? Put them knowingly in peril’s way for the sole sake of exploring their true potential?”

Tenjouin backed up one step with wide eyes. “Kiyotaki-kouchou…” she gasped.

Kiyotaki then calmed down and withdrew back into his chair. “Samejima-san did what he did because he knew the world would need the power that that boy possessed. And now, we may be in need of a different kind of power. And this is the only way that that power can be awakened.”

---

Chiba stood on the edge of the bluff where the Osiris Red dorms stood and looked out at the setting sun, hands in pockets. He didn’t see the Osiris headmistress heading towards him.

“Chiba-kun,” she said. “You didn’t show up at classes today.”

“Matsutani-sensei… I know,” Chiba replied. “You know about what happened to Shougo-kun, yes?”

“Yes, of course,” Matsutani said and smiled a bit. “But that’s no reason to slack off in your studies. Chiba-kun, you’re the best student Osiris has and although it would be sad if you left us, I still want to encourage you to move up to Ra. Don’t let something like this hold you back.”

“I don’t know if I want to move up,” Chiba said. “Shougo-kun is not just my roommate, he’s my friend and… I think he needs my help.”

“That sounds very unusual coming from you!” Matsutani said. “You used to be so individualistic, saying every duelist should stand on his own.”

“I still believe that,” Chiba said. “But sometimes a general has to recognize when one of his soldiers needs help. Not… that I think of Shougo-kun that way. It’s just a metaphor!”

Matsutani laughed. “Well, he’s certainly had an effect on everyone. Your friend’s shaken things up a bit.”

Chiba just sighed and looked out at the sea again. “I’ll show up in class tomorrow,” he said. “Thank you for your concern… Matsutani-sensei.”

Matsutani nodded and knew it was a point to be discreet. She returned to her office quietly.

---

Tenjouin walked out of Kiyotaki’s office. He had said he didn’t have any further information, other than Shougo and Darkness were connected

somehow and that there were signs that the Light of Ruin was returning.

She went to visit Shougo in the medical office and found Hinata Toragami there standing vigil.

“Toragami-san?” Tenjouin said. “What are you doing here?”

Toragami glanced up. “Tenjouin-sama,” she said and bowed her head, showing a surprising amount of deference.

Tenjouin blushed slightly. “‘Sama’?” she asked.

“You’ve inspired me very much,” Toragami said. “There is no other way to address someone like that.”

Tenjouin knew a bit about this girl. Hinata Toragami was the daughter of a powerful family in the Japanese business world. She was widely recognized as an expert duelist and was, in fact, undefeated — she had picked up the nickname ‘Blitzkrieg Queen’. To be honest, there was more reason for Tenjouin to be impressed by Toragami than the other way around.

“Are you friends with Aoyama-kun, Toragami-san?” Tenjouin asked.

“No,” Toragami said. “Truth be told, I don’t like him very much at all.”

Tenjouin was taken aback at the student’s blunt honesty.

“So… why are you here?”

“I dueled him before,” Toragami said. “I thought he was promising. But he disappointed me. I won’t let him be a disappointment anymore.”

“You dueled Aoyama-kun?” Tenjouin said. “Surely he wasn’t as bad as that.”

“Come now, Tenjouin-sama,” Toragami replied. “You and I both know you would have defeated him easily.”

“Still, he’s certainly not a terrible duelist. And even if he was, that doesn’t mean he deserved what happened to him.”

“‘Deserve’?” Toragami said with a frown. “I don’t know the meaning of that word.”

Tenjouin blinked, somewhat confused. It was strange to hear something like that coming from the daughter of a family of privilege.

“Have you come to watch over this boy?” Toragami said, turning her eyes to her teacher. “Don’t you have other students that are important, too?”

“Yes, but of course I’m concerned about this one,” Tenjouin nodded.

Ayukawa came into the room. “Alright, it’s time to let Aoyama-san rest. Let’s go.”

As Tenjouin turned to leave, she thought she saw something strange. She turned back briefly and glanced at Toragami.

Was she… glowing?

*It’s my imagination,* she thought to herself.

Toragami paused before she herself left Shougo’s room.

*There is a reason I let you live,* she thought to herself. *But if you’re going to further strain the people who believe in what you offer… you MUST be stronger than this, Aoyama Shougo. You can’t afford to be a child anymore!*

Her left hand clenched hard.

*I’ll be waiting here to defeat you once again.*

---

**Mark:** “It’s here! It’s finally here!”
**Katsuki:** “Calm down, you loser dog…”
**Mark:** “Toragami agrees to duel the greatest American champion, Mark Walker! Isn’t it great? I can finally show Duel Academia what I’m made of!”
**Katsuki:** “And because you beat me once you think you have a shot against the Blitzkrieg Queen? Don’t kid yourself!”
**Mark:** “Toragami agrees to duel me, no holds barred. It’ll be a battle for the ages, so make sure to watch my awesome victory!”
**Aino:** “Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: ‘Mark vs. Toragami: The Insufficient Belief.’”**
**Mark:** “That’s right! No one believes in themselves more than I do!”
**Katsuki:** “Loser…”

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# 16. Mark vs Toragami!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (). Thank you very much for reading.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0 —**
***Turn Sixteen: "Mark vs. Toragami! The Insufficient Belief"***

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The Duel Academia was all abuzz as they gathered in the arena to watch an exhibition duel — the one that some had been waiting for ever since "that American duelist" arrived at the academy.

Mark Walker was going to duel the Blitzkrieg Queen.

Katsurou Chiba and Isabel Suarez were encouraged by Ayukawa to attend the duel and cheer their friend on, so they were in the audience as well.

“This is amazing,” Isabel said. “I never thought Mark would get his duel so quickly.”

“And… he asked Toragami-san to not take it easy on him?” Chiba asked, adjusting his glasses.

“Do you think a guy like Mark Walker would have it any other way?”

Chiba nodded and glanced at Mark, who was on the field waiting for his opponent. The crowd was in a mixture of cheers and boos, although the boos seemed to be more prominent. But the way Mark looked as he smiled and waved to the crowd made it appear that he only heard the cheers.

He then closed his eyes for a bit and reflected on the events that caused this duel to happen…

---

*Mark had come in the medical office to check on Shougo when he saw Hinata Toragami and her two*

*friends in the room.*

*"Toragami's here?" Mark shouted indignantly. "And nobody told her that I came here to duel her?"*

*Toragami looked towards Katsuki. "This is the boy you lost to?"*

*Katsuki's eyes widened and then she frowned. "He got lucky."*

*"So what can I do for the top American duelist?" Toragami asked.*

*"Well, I came across the Pacific just to duel you, so the least you could do is give me an answer!" Mark said. "Will you duel me, yes or no?"*

*Toragami looked the duelist over. Her face showed some disdain. Finally she said, "I suppose it would be an interesting diversion. I'll duel you tomorrow afternoon."*

*Katsuki gasped. "Hina… Toragami-sama! You just got back from your family business, don't you think you should rest a bit?"*

*"Wait!" Mark said. "If you're going to duel me, I have a condition."*

*Katsuki facefaulted with anger. "Why you…"*

*“Tell me,” Toragami said.*

*“Don’t hold back on me! Give it your all! Otherwise, it’s a waste of time for us both! I wouldn’t want to win or lose knowing you were fooling around.”*

*Toragami’s other friend, Aino, who had been silent thus far, now spoke up. “Mr. Walker, be careful what you’re asking,” she said. “Remember who you’re talking to.”*

*“I know who I’m talking to! I want to defeat her at her best!”*

*Toragami paused for a bit, then nodded. “Very well,” she said. “As long as you remember who you’re dealing with, I won’t have a problem with giving it my all…”*

---

Mark’s reverie was interrupted by the arrival of Hinata Toragami, an appearance that caused the audience to erupt in cheers of support. She looked at her opponent through steely eyes.

“She looks ready,” Isabel said. “I wonder if we’ll get a good match.”

Naomi Aino walked in from the side. “If Toragami-sama said she wouldn’t hold back, then I don’t think there will be much of a match.”

“Aino-san!” Chiba said. “Where’s Katsuki-san?”

“She’s down helping Toragami,” Aino replied, pointing downward for Chiba and Isabel to see. Katsuki was in the arena, fitting Toragami with her Duel Disk.

“Katsuki-san usually helps Toragami-sama during duels,” Aino went on. “I thought you should know… Mark asked for a real match from Toragami-sama. So this might not take long.”

“Don’t underestimate Mark-san because he’s American,” Isabel reminded her. “I’ve played him and he knows his stuff.”

“I just wonder why Katsuki-san has to put on Toragami-san’s Duel Disk for her,” Chiba said. “There’s just something haughty about that.”

“That’s not the reason,” Aino said. “Look carefully at Toragami-sama. Do you notice anything odd about her?”

Chiba narrowed his eyes and watched as Katsuki attached the duel disk to Hinata’s left arm.

Toragami's free hand; something looked odd about it.

*Is she wearing a glove…* Chiba thought to himself. Then he gasped. *Or could it be…*

"Artificial?" Chiba shouted. "Toragami-sama only has o…"

"Shut up!" Aino said, grabbing Chiba's mouth. "Some people in the company don't even know about this!"

"Sorry, sorry," Chiba said, keeping his voice down. "What happened to her?"

Aino sighed and looked away for a moment. "Toragami-sama wasn't always the stern, serious person you know," she said. "In fact, she used to be a very happy girl. At least, when I knew her. Until that day…"

She trailed off.

"If you don't want to talk about it, it's okay," Chiba said.

"Thank you, Chiba-kun," Aino said, nodding. "It's not an easy thing to remember."

From the faculty seat, Asuka Tenjouin watched the proceedings with some concern, recalling her meeting with Kiyotaki about the announcement of the duel prior.

---

*“I understand your feelings, but Aoyama Shougo’s not the only student in this school,” Kiyotaki said. “Walker-san came here hoping to achieve his dream of challenging Toragami-san and I don’t see any reason for us to get in the way of that.”*

*“But isn’t Walker-kun a friend of Aoyama-kun?” Tenjouin protested. “How can he think of his own glory when his friend needs him?”*

*“Think of how Walker-san feels,” Kiyotaki replied. “‘What would my friend want me to do in this situation?’ I’m sure he believes that his friend would encourage him to strive on.”*

*Tenjouin crossed her arms and looked down. “But… what if he wakes up? Don’t you think he’d be upset if he found out people were moving on without him? I feel like he’s that kind of person.”*

*“You seem to have a strong connection with this boy. Have you thought about why that is?”*

*Tenjouin thought back to their duel, and how she had thought of her brother when Shougo played Red-Eyes. Perhaps Shougo reminded her of him?*

*Her eyes widened when she realized they were both also connected to Darkness. She then clutched her chest as memories she didn’t want returned to her. She sighed deeply.*

*“I know what you’re going through,” Kiyotaki said. “You don’t want those memories, do you? But part of growing up, Tenjouin-san, is accepting your past, and moving on. You shouldn’t let those memories frame who you become.”*

*Tenjouin frowned. “I don’t believe that,” she said. “Whether you like it or not, memories shape who you are and who you will be. I hope someday to show you that… Kiyotaki-kouchou. In the meantime… I’ll watch this duel.”*

*Kiyotaki smiled and closed his eyes as Tenjouin walked away. “Do what you must,” he said.*

Who said anything about throwing your memories away? *he thought to himself.* But Tenjouin Asuka, you must discover that truth for yourself.

The thoughts of those watching the upcoming match were interrupted by the announcer's booming voice coming over the loudspeaker. "EVERYONE! This is the moment you've all been waiting for! The ultimate overseas exhibition match! On one side, we have top American duelist and current Ra Yellow student at the Duel Academia… MARK WALKER!"

Again, a mixture of boos and cheers, and Mark saw Chiba and Isabel in the crowd and waved to them.

"And on the other side… you all get to see a rare treat! The legendary future of dueling, the undefeated Japanese champion, the Blitzkrieg Queen herself… TORAGAMI HIIINATAAA!"

Toragami furrowed her brow and closed her eyes as the crowd yelled madly to show their support. Katsuki blushed bashfully and backed away from the field.

"I know you got things to do," Mark said. "So let's get this show on the road! My first move… draw!"

He glanced at hand and grinned. *That Toragami has a lot of confidence, it seems… but so do I!*

“I’ll set a monster card on the field,” he said. “Then I’ll set one other card facedown, and that’ll be all.”

“That’s it?!” Isabel shouted. “Come on, you have to do better than that against the Blitzkrieg Queen!”

“My turn,” Toragami said in her emotionless tone. “Draw. I activate ‘Solar Exchange’, and discard a Lightlord Paladin Jean from my hand to draw two cards. Then I send the top two cards of my deck to the cemetery.”

She pulled two cards, then hit a button on her Duel Disk, ejecting two cards from the top of her deck directly to the graveyard slot. They were Lightlord Monk Ehren and Lightlord Beast Wolf. The slot on the duel disk began to glow, and then a white-haired wolf monster appeared on the field.

***Lightlord Beast Wolf*** *— L4 Light Beast (2100 ATK)*

“What the hell is that?” Isabel shouted indignantly.

“Since Lightlord Beast Wolf was sent from my deck to the cemetery, I will special summon him to the field in attack mode,” Toragami explained. “Next I will summon Lightlord Summoner Luminous in attack mode.”

A dark-skinned woman in light colored robes appeared next to the wolf. Her hands were glowing with pentagram symbols around them, causing an aura between her arms that looked almost like a staff.

***Lightlord Summoner Luminous*** *— LV3 Light Spellcaster (1000 ATK)*

“I will now activate Lightlord Summoner Luminous’ effect,” Toragami said. “By discarding one card from my hand, I can summon a Lightlord monster from the cemetery. I’ll place ‘Command Silencer’ from my hand to the cemetery and I’ll summon Lightlord Monk Ehren in attack mode.”

A pigtailed warrior woman dressed in white chest armor and boots appeared on the field, entering a battle stance.

***Lightlord Monk Ehren*** *— LV4 Light Warrior (1600 ATK)*

“Three monsters in one turn?!” Isabel screamed. “That’s insane!”

“That’s Toragami’s strategy,” Chiba remarked. “They don’t call her the ‘Blitzkrieg Queen’ for nothing.”

“But this is unusually fast for her,” Aino said. “Mark asked Toragami-sama not to hold back. This is what happens when people face her true self.”

“True self?” Chiba wondered as he looked at the duelist. He could almost feel her strength emanating from her, like when she dueled Shougo, but there was something else…

“When Ehren attacks a defense position monster, it is returned to the deck,” Toragami explained. “So… Ehren, relieve my opponent’s hidden monster of its duties… attack with Light of Serenity.”

Ehren leaped from her place on Toragami’s field and prepared to launch a kick on Mark’s facedown.

“It won’t be that easy!” Mark shouted. “I reveal my facedown… the spell card known as Enemy Controller!”

A game controller appeared on the field and shot an electrical zap at Ehren, who dropped her kick

short, shown struggling to resist the card's magic.

"I can force one of your monsters to switch its battle position," Mark said. "I of course choose Lightlord Monk Ehren!"

Ehren dropped back on Toragami's side of the field and held her arms out in front of her in a defensive stance, apparently against her will.

***Lightlord Monk Ehren*** *— (1000 DEF)*

"Wow…" Isabel said. "I can't believe I was worried."

"Don't think it's over for a moment," Aino reminded her. "She still has two monsters and Mark has nothing to protect it."

"Lightlord Summoner Luminous, attack," Toragami went on. "Light of Illusion!"

Luminous held her arms as if they held a staff and pointed it at the facedown monster, shooting a blast.

"Hey hey," Mark said with some amount of indignance. "You said you weren't going to hold back, but you'd attack my facedown with such a weak monster?"

“Just reveal it,” Toragami said.

Mark grumped as his Grizzly Mother was revealed. With 1000 defense points, it matched Luminous’ 1000 attack points.

***Grizzly Mother*** *— LV4 Water Beast (1000 DEF)*

“I’ll set three cards and end my turn,” Toragami said. “And due to the effects of Ehren and Luminous, I send the top 6 cards of my deck to the cemetery.” She pulled the cards and placed them in her cemetery slot. Among them were many good cards — Lightning Vortex and Mirror Force, for example — but no more Beast Wolves.

“Those were good cards,” Isabel noted. “How is it Toragami-san can win with such a self-destructive strategy?”

“You’ll see,” Aino said and looked to Chiba, who nodded knowingly. He’d seen the strategy behind the self-milling himself, and it was something to be feared when Toragami eventually got her ace monster out.

“But why didn’t she have Beast Wolf attack Mark’s Grizzly?” Isabel said.

“Isabel-san, you should know better than anyone,” Chiba said. “Grizzly Mother’s effect lets Mark-san summon a water monster from his deck. She won’t really solve anything by attacking and letting her opponent summon something more troublesome.”

“It’s my turn now,” Mark said, and pulled a card out of his deck. ‘Toragami-san, forgive me.’ he chuckled while trying to sound polite in Japanese, largely failing. “I normally believe that someone should be able to beat anyone with their own deck, but I prepared a new deck just to fight you.”

“Is that so?” Toragami said.

“I’ll show you the power of America,” Mark shouted, which caused much of the audience to groan. “Abyss Soldier, let’s go!”

A bizarre humanoid-whale hybrid holding a trident appeared on the field.

***Abyss Soldier** — LV4 Water Aqua (1800 ATK)*

“Now I’ll activate Abyss Soldier’s effect, and discard Killer Snake from my hand to the cemetery,” Mark said. “And I can pick one card on the field and return it to its owner’s hand. I believe I’ll pick that troublesome wolf of yours!”

The Abyss Soldier shot a blast from its trident at Toragami's wolf, causing it to howl as its hologram to vanish from the field. The card moved from Toragami's duel disk to back in her hand.

Mark snapped his fingers. "How do you like that?" he shouted in English. "There's more, too! Grizzly Mother, switch to attack mode! And now I'll have Abyss Soldier attack your Luminous."

***Grizzly Mother*** *(1400 ATK)*

The whale monster threw an image of its trident at Toragami's summoner. But Toragami appeared unconcerned.

"Reverse card open," she said. "Continuous trap, Lightlord Barrier. I send the top two cards of my deck to the cemetery, and your attack is negated."

A field of light appeared deflecting Abyss Soldier's attack. Again, her duel disk ejected two cards automatically, and again, the graveyard slot glowed. But this time, it was a magic card that appeared on the field, depicting the image of a sword and staff.

"Equip magic Lightlord Rapier," Toragami said. "When it's sent from the deck to the cemetery by a Lightlord card effect, I can equip it to a Lightlord

monster on the field. I choose Lightlord Summoner Luminous as its recipient."

Luminous grabbed the sword in one hand and the staff in the other, and twirled them as her attack rose to 1700.

***Lightlord Summoner Luminous*** *— 1000 ATK + 700 = 1700 ATK*

"I'm not done yet," Mark said, not seeming to be aware that Lightlord Barrier was a continuous trap. "Grizzly Mother, attack Lightlord Monk Ehren!"

"I activate Lightlord Barrier's effect and send 2 more cards from my deck to the cemetery," Toragami droned. "And your attack is negated." The bear uselessly clawed the force field.

"What could he be thinking?" Isabel said. "He's been preparing for this match forever. He should know what her cards do."

"Maybe that losing dog is overconfident," Katsuki said, walking in to join the three.

"Shiho-chan, where have you been?" Aino asked, somewhat annoyed. "You were supposed to come up here after helping Toragami-sama!"

“I got caught up in this and that,” Katsuki replied, closing her eyes and grinning. “Besides, it’s not like Toragami-sama needs my support. She’ll beat this idiot easily.”

“Maybe it’s something else,” Chiba said. “By my count, Toragami’s got 20 cards in the grave by now. If she has the standard size deck, that’s half of her deck.”

“So what? It’s not like he’s the first guy to try to deck her out before,” Katsuki huffed.

*I don’t think that’s his strategy,* Chiba thought to himself. *Someone like Mark-san… he could only be…*

“I’ll set one card facedown and end my turn,” Mark said. “Toragami-san! My strategy for victory is halfway complete! Everyone watch what a champion can do!”

“So he is trying to deck her out!” Katsuki said.

“Mark-san?” Chiba murmured disappointedly.

Toragami ignored his bluster. “My turn. Draw. I will switch Lightlord Summoner Luminous to defense position.”

***Lightlord Summoner Luminous*** *(1000 DEF)*

“Defense? Why?” Isabel wondered.

“This is it,” Aino said. “Mark should have known better.”

The crowd was murmuring, some of them knowing what was coming next.

“With Paladin Jean, Warrior Garoth, Angel Cherubim and Priest Jenice in the cemetery, I can borrow their power,” Toragami said. “By the dying sparks of their sacrifice, I call on you. Open the sky and reveal yourself!”

The scenery seemed to rumble as a crack opened in the ground, and a beam of light took the form of a feathered dragon, immense and powerful. It growled quietly as its shape solidified.

“Come out! Judgment Dragoon!” Toragami shouted.

***Judgment Dragoon*** *LV8 Light Dragon (3000 ATK)*

“That’s… the ace card of the Lightlords,” Isabel gasped. “This is the first time I’ve seen it!”

“That whelp,” Katsuki muttered. “He shouldn’t have asked Toragami-sama not to hold back. Otherwise, this might actually be a bit interesting.”

“It’s not that simple,” Chiba said. “Why would she put her other monsters in defense mode? If she was going to use the effect, she wouldn’t bother. And if she weren’t, she would have left them in attack mode and finished this now.”

Isabel snapped her fingers. “Unless…”

“Thank you for summoning your ace so early!” Mark shouted. “That’s just what I wanted! Reverse card open… ‘The Blessings of Birth’! When a monster is Special Summoned, I can activate this card, and your turn immediately ends!”

Toragami’s eyes narrowed.

“And of course, since it’s now your End Phase, you have to lose ten cards,” Mark said. “Four for Judgment Dragoon, and three each for your other Lightlords. Let’s see if there are any more wolves waiting in the wings?”

Ten cards slid into the cemetery slot, and another Beast Wolf appeared on the field. Toragami’s deck now had only nine cards left.

***Lightlord Beast Wolf*** *(2100 ATK)*

“Now let’s see if my preparation paid off,” Mark said, drawing a card. “First, I activate Killer Snake’s

effect. Because it's in the graveyard, I can place it right back in my hand. And now I'll activate Abyss Soldier's effect!"

"Very good," Chiba mused. "Now he can use its effect with Abyss Soldier again, and return that Lightlord Barrier back to Toragami-san's hand."

"Hmph!" Katsuki snorted. "What a boring strategy. To be expected from an American deadweight."

"I bet you think I'm gonna discard Killer Snake, but nope," Mark said. "I'm discarding this card from my hand — 'Rainbow Snake Eingana'!"

Everyone in the audience gasped.

"'Rainbow Snake Eingana'?" Aino said. "I've never heard of that card."

"I've heard about it," Chiba said. "It was an extremely limited production… there were rumors about the game, in its early life, that several sets of cards were made for a virtual game that never got off the ground. 'Eingana'… I think that was one of the cards."

"I guess it's part of Mark's strategy," Isabel said. "But why would he discard it?"

“Time for a gamble,” Mark went on. “I activate from my hand… the spell card ‘Life Slashing Treasure’! I’ll draw until I have five cards in my hand. And if I haven’t got this won in five turns, I have to dump whatever’s in my hand to the grave! So I gotta make this count!”

He put his hand to his deck. “I have two cards in my hand. So I get three more. Let’s go!”

He pulled his three cards, looked at them and smiled widely. “Luck favors the prepared! I activate… the field spell ‘Legendary City Atlantis’!”

“Legendary… wow,” Isabel noted. “He’s using the real card names now. I guess this means he’s serious about it.”

The arena became an aquatic castle with fish and mermen swimming around in the distance. “When the field is ‘Legendary City Atlantis’, water monsters in the hand and on the field are downgraded one level,” Mark explained. “Which means I can summon level 7 monsters with just one sacrifice. Monsters like… Levia-Dragon Daedalus! I sacrifice my Abyss Soldier to summon you out!”

Abyss Soldier shimmered away and the ground where it once stood open to reveal a massive blue

and purple sea serpent that coiled around the towers of the field. It roared at Toragami's Judgment Dragoon threateningly.

***Levia-Dragon — Daedalus*** *— LV7 Water Sea-Serpent (2600 ATK + 200 = 2800 ATK)*

"So he's thinking of clearing the field with that stupid thing," Katsuki said. "But he's in for a surprise if he thinks it'll be that easy."

"But if he succeeds, he'll probably win," Chiba said.

"What do you mean?" asked Aino.

"Think about it. Why would Mark-san discard Rainbow Snake Eingana and not Killer Snake? The answer is… he has a means to revive Eingana from the cemetery!"

"So if he does clear the field, he'll get Eingana out to join his Levia-Dragon, and attack for game!" Isabel said. "What a perfect plan."

Aino and Katsuki glanced at each other and sighed.

In the meantime, Asuka Tenjouin watched from the faculty balcony along with her co-workers. *That*

*American student is doing very well for himself*, she thought. *But then, what's this uneasy feeling?*

"Now, without further ado, I'l activate Levia-Dragon's special ability," Mark said. "By sending my field spell to the graveyard, I can destroy all cards on the field other than Levia-Dragon! Go, Levia Destruction!"

The field shimmered away as its remaining holograms turned into a shining ball centered on the sea serpent's mouth. Levia-Dragon shot its blast out onto the center of the field, which caused the arena to flood with holographic water.

***Levia-Dragon — Daedalus*** *— 2800 ATK — 200 = 2600 ATK*

But Toragami was unfazed. "It's useless," she said. "Reverse card open… 'Hierophant's Wand'."

Tenjouin saw the card and gasped involuntarily. She remembered that card.

"By the effect of this card, no cards on my side of the field can be destroyed with card effects," Toragami said. "In exchange, you can draw one card."

“It’s all good,” Mark said as he drew his card. “I expected you’d have a trick like this, anyway.”

The crowd gasped at Mark’s bold statement. He’d expected this?

“I’ll let you worry about that,” Mark said. “For now, I’m playing another card from my hand… the spell card ‘Living Frog’. By discarding a water monster from my hand, I’ll revive a water monster from my graveyard.”

Isabel snapped her fingers. “!Eso!” she shouted. “That’s why he sent Eingana to the cemetery.”

“And he saved Killer Snake so he could discard it for that card,” Chiba said. “That’s a good move. Shougo-kun would have enjoyed watching this duel…”

Isabel frowned and just looked on quietly.

“You didn’t have that card in your hand earlier, did you?” Toragami said. “You relied on luck by using your ‘Life-Slashing Treasure’ card. Is that really a safe strategy?”

“Well, luck’s a big part of the game,” Mark said with a shrug. “I mean, I’ve read up on your duels,

and a lot of your victories were based on good draws as well."

"You…! You idiot!" Katsuki shouted in a pointless attempt to get Mark to hear her. "Say that again, you loser dog!"

Toragami gave a very slight smirk. "Are you sure about that?" she asked.

Mark was rattled by her apparent show of emotion. "I-in any case… I'll summon Rainbow Snake Eingana from my graveyard to the field!"

A flash beside the Levia-Dragon opened a portal beneath the ground, out of which shot out a giant snake with rainbow-colored skin. It hissed and glared and coiled itself. Its attack points were 2200, not a match at all for Judgment Dragoon.

***Rainbow Snake Eingana*** *— LV7 Water Sea-Serpent (2200 ATK)*

Mark clenched his fist, though, appearing confident. "I can't destroy your monsters with my effects, but I can still attack! Levia-Dragon, attack Lightlord Beast Wolf now! Levia Stream!"

His sea serpent shot a blue and purple light blast at Toragami's monster, but the attack was deflected

harmlessly off of it.

“Your turn is for nothing,” Toragami said. “I activate my other face-down card, ‘Emissaries of Harmony’, preventing my monsters from being destroyed in battle this turn.”

Mark took a step back and grunted a bit. “Don’t think it’s over, though,” he said. “I set one card face-down and end my turn.”

“Then I’ll draw,” Toragami said, reaching for her deck.

“Before you do, I’d like to tell you one thing,” Mark said. “In the interests of full disclosure, I thought you should know about Rainbow Snake Eingana’s special effect. It is a rather rare card and perhaps you’ve never seen it before.”

“Go on,” Toragami replied.

“You see, if Eingana is destroyed, whether it be in battle or through a card effect, all of your monsters are automatically destroyed as well,” Mark said, and smiled widely. “So you see, if you use your Judgment Dragoon’s effect to destroy my field, you’ll lose all your monsters as well. And if you ignore my facedown and attack, the result will be the same!”

The crowd gasped as Mark's strategy became apparent.

"So what?" Katsuki asked. "Toragami-sama should just destroy Levia-Dragon and leave it at that."

"It's not that simple," Aino reminded her. "Toragami-sama has her Dragoon and two Lightlords on the field. If she just attacks Levia-Dragon, then on the end of her turn she will have to discard the remainder of her deck. No matter what Mark does, she'd lose."

"Lose?!" Katsuki shouted. "Toragami-sama, lose?"

"It's not a bad strategy," Chiba said. "If you're fighting against someone renowned for counterattacking every tactic, you might as well let her and run the clock down. But I don't think that's Mark's goal, either."

Isabel nodded. "He plans to end it in his next turn," she remarked.

But Aino shook her head. "It's not over by a long shot. Toragami-sama has been in worse situations than this."

Toragami eyed her opponent.

“You place your belief in your deck, don’t you?” she said. “I suppose you think that makes you a true duelist.”

“Of course,” Mark said. “What kind of duelist would I be if I didn’t?”

“I’m going to teach you something about belief,” Toragami replied. “Trusting in your cards and the strategy you’ve created to come through for you… that isn’t enough. Your belief will fail you.”

Mark chuckled and ran his fingers through his hair. “Are you trying to get in my head?” he said. “I wouldn’t think someone who was called the ‘Blitzkrieg Queen’ would resort to mind games.”

“This is not a mind game,” Toragami said coolly. “It’s a simple fact. What you believe in is not enough. That’s all.”

She looked at the card she drew and placed it in her hand.

“My next move,” she stated finally, “will prove it to you.”

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster, "Rainbow Snake Eingana"***
Level seven Sea-Serpent, attack power 2200, defense power 2400. When this card on the field is destroyed, all monsters your opponent controls are destroyed as well.

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**Mark:** "How do you like that? It's my strategy to defeat you!"
**Katsuki:** "You can't possibly think that that's enough?"
**Aino:** "Mark struggles on to defeat his foe, but Toragami-sama simply repeats what she said. His belief is not enough? What could it mean?"
**Mark:** "I don't care about any of that! I'm not gonna lose!"
**Aino:** "Meanwhile, Tenjouin-sensei sees a sight that frightens her to her core. Could it be? Mark's trump card is actually…"
**Katsuki:** "Next time on **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: '*The Paradox of Fate! Judgment Dragoon VS Blue Ice White Nights Dragon*'!"
**Mark:** "Action! Surprises! And a whole lotta me!"

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CARDS USED BY MARK WALKER:

**GRIZZLY MOTHER (Mother Grizzly)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Beast, 1400/1000)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, you may Special Summon 1 Water-attribute monster with 1500 ATK or less from your Deck in Attack Position.

**ENEMY CONTROLLER**
*Instant Magic*
Select 1 of these two effects:
Sacrifice 1 Monster on your side of the field. Take control of a monster on your opponent's side of the field until the End Phase of this turn.
Change the battle position of 1 monster your opponent controls.

**ABYSS SOLDIER**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Aqua, 1800/1300)*
Once per turn, you may discard 1 Water-attribute monster from your hand to the cemetery to return 1 card on the field to its owner's hand.

**KILLER SNAKE (Sinister Serpent)**
*Effect Monster (L1 Water Reptile, 300/250)*
During your Standby Phase, if this card is in your cemetery, you can place it in your hand.

**BLESSINGS OF BIRTH (Celebration of Creation)**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only during your opponent's turn when a Monster Card is Special Summoned. The opponent must immediately enter their End Phase.

**RAINBOW SNAKE EINGANA**
*Effect Monster (L7 Water Sea-Serpent, 2200/2400)*
If this monster is destoyed and sent to the cemetery, destroy all monsters your opponent controls.

**LIFE SLASHING TREASURE (Card of Demise)**
*Normal Magic*
Draw until your hand contains 5 cards. On your fifth Standby Phase after the activation of this card, discard all cards in your hand into the cemetery.

**LEGENDARY CITY ATLANTIS (A Legendary Ocean)**
*Field Magic*
This card's name is treated as "Umi". Downgrade all Water-attribute monsters in both player's hands and on the field by 1 Level. Increase the ATK and DEF of all Water-attribute Monsters by 200 points.

**LEVIA-DRAGON — DAEDALUS**
*Effect Monster (L7 Water Sea Serpent, 2600/1500)*

You may send “Umi” on your side of the field to the cemetery to destroy all cards on the field except this card.

**LIVING FROG (Frog Resurrection)**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 Water-attribute monster from your hand. Special Summon 1 Water-attribute monster from your cemetery.

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CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI:
**SOLAR EXCHANGE**
*Normal Magic*
Send 1 “Lightlord” Monster Card from your hand to the cemetery to draw 2 cards from your deck. Then, send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD PALADIN JEAN (Jain, Lightsworn Paladin)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1800/1200)*
When this card attacks a monster, it gains 300 ATK during the Damage Step. During your End Phase, send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD MONK EHREN (Ehren, Lightsworn Monk)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Light Warrior, 1600/1000)*
I f this card attacks a Defense Position monster, return that monster to it's owner's Deck before damage calculation. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD BEAST WOLF (Wulf, Lightsworn Beast)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Beast-Warrior, 2100/300)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. When this card is sent from your Deck to your cemetery, Special Summon this card.

**LIGHTLORD SUMMONER LUMINOUS (Lumina, Lightsworn Summoner)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1000/1000)*
Once per turn, you can discard 1 card from your hand to Special Summon a Level 4 or lower "Lightlord" Monster from your cemetery. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**COMMAND SILENCER**
*Instant Magic*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Negate that attack, and draw 1 card.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE (Mirror Force)**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Destroy all Attack Position monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**LIGHTNING VORTEX**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 card from your hand. Destroy all face-up monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**LIGHTLORD BARRIER (Lightsworn Barrier)**
*Continuous Trap*
Send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery to negate an opponent's attack against a "Lightlord" Monster you control.

**LIGHTLORD RAPIER (Lightsworn Sabre)**
*Equip Magic*
Equip only to a "Lightlord" monster. The equipped monster gains 700 Attack points. When this card is sent from your deck to the Cemetery, you can equip it to 1 "Lightlord" monster you control.

**LIGHTLORD WARRIOR GAROTH (Garoth, Lightsworn Warrior)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1850/1300)*

If cards are sent from the deck to the cemetery by the effect of a “Lightlord” monster you control other than ‘Lightlord Warrior Garos’, you may send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery, and for each “Lightlord” Monster discarded by this effect, draw 1 card.

**LIGHTLORD ANGEL CHERUBIM (Celestia, Lightsworn Angel)**
*Effect Monster (LV5 Light Angel, 2300/200)*
When you sacrifice a “Lightlord” monster to summon this card, you can send 4 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery to destroy up to 2 cards your opponent controls.

**LIGHTLORD PRIEST JANICE (Jenis, Lightsworn Mender)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 300/2100)*
During the End Phase, if cards were sent from your deck to the cemetery by the effect of a “Lightlord” card this turn, inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent and gain 500 Life Points.

**JUDGMENT DRAGOON (Judgment Dragon)**
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Dragon, 3000/2600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except when there are 4 or more unique “Lightlord” Monsters in

your cemetery. By paying 1000 Life Points, destroy all cards on the field except this one. During your End Phase, send 4 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**HIEROPHANT'S WAND (Emperor's Staff)**

*Normal Trap*

Your opponent draws 1 card. This turn, cards you control cannot be destroyed by your opponent's card effects.

**EMISSARIES OF HARMONY (Waboku)**

*Normal Trap*

You take no Battle Damage this turn, and your Monsters cannot be destroyed as a result of battle.

# 17. The Paradox of Fate! JD vs BIWND

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to leave me your thoughts in a comment if you can. Thank you very much for reading.*

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Mark Walker and Hinata Toragami were still in the midst of their duel. Both players still had 4000 life points. Mark's field contained Levia-Dragon Daedalus and his ace for the duel, Rainbow Snake Eingana, along with a facedown card. Toragami had her ace, the Judgment Dragoon, along with Lightlords Summoner Luminous and Beast Wolf.

However, she only had nine cards left in her deck.

“It’s my turn,” Toragami said. “I’ll draw.”

“Before you do, I’d like to tell you one thing,” Mark said. “In the interests of full disclosure, I thought you should know about Rainbow Snake Eingana’s special effect. You see, if Eingana is destroyed, whether it be in battle or through a card effect, all of your monsters are automatically destroyed as well.”

The crowd gasped as Mark’s strategy became apparent.

Toragami eyed her opponent.

“You place your belief in your deck, don’t you?” she said. “I suppose you think that makes you a true duelist.”

“Of course,” Mark said. “What kind of duelist would I be if I didn’t?”

“I’m going to teach you something about belief,” Toragami replied. “Trusting in your cards and the strategy you’ve created to come through for you… that isn’t enough. Your belief will fail you.”

Mark chuckled and ran his fingers through his hair. “Are you trying to get in my head?” he said. “I wouldn’t think someone who was called the ‘Blitzkrieg Queen’ would resort to mind games.”

“This is not a mind game,” Toragami said coolly. “It’s a simple fact. What you believe in is not enough. That’s all.”

She looked at the card she drew and placed it in her hand.

“My next move,” she stated finally, “will prove it to you.”

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**YU-GI-OH! -0**
**Turn Seventeen: *“The Paradox of Fate! Judgment Dragoon VS Blue Ice White Nights Dragon”***

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Toragami drew the cards in her hand together and pointed at her opponent. "First... I'm going to pay 1000 life points to activate Judgment Dragoon's effect."

***Toragami** — 4000 LP — 1000 — 3000 LP*

“What?! But that will just destroy the entire field!” Katsuki shouted.

“Go!” Toragami shouted. “Erase everything with the light of truth!”

The Dragoon’s body glowed all white, and then released this gathered light onto the field. It was so bright that the entire audience had to shield their eyes.

When the light finally faded, all the monsters — Lightlords and Sea Serpents alike — and the cards on the field were blanched white except for Judgment Dragoon. Their holograms shattered one by one.

“Rainbow Snake Eingana’s effect activates now,” Mark said. “And it’ll destroy your Judgment Dragoon!”

A rainbow burst came out of Eingana’s shattered body and rippled through Toragami’s field. It struck Judgment Dragoon, who reeled back, roared and eventually shattered himself.

The audience was up in arms.

“That guy… defeated the Blitzkrieg Queen’s ultimate card!”

“I can’t believe it!”

“We don’t know which way this match will go now!”

Katsuki looked ready to spit. “I can’t believe this!” she muttered. “Why on earth would Toragami-sama intentionally trigger that losing dog’s effect?”

“It was probably a smart move,” Aino mused.

“Huh?”

“By destroying all the monsters on the field, Toragami doesn’t have to send ten cards to the cemetery on the end of her turn,” Aino said. “She needs to limit her deck loss now, or she’ll lose the whole match.”

“But… without Judgment Dragoon…”

“Have you lost faith in Toragami-sama already?” Aino replied with widened eyes. “Surely you know she’s capable of winning without Judgment Dragoon.”

“I know, but…”

“Or perhaps you’re acknowledging that Mark Walker is a skilled duelist?” Aino’s expression suddenly turned into a coy smile.

“I… what… no! I… hmph!”

“That’s not all,” Mark said. “My facedown card? It was a card whose effect only activates when it’s destroyed while facedown, so I must thank you. Reveal trap… ‘Dowsing Point’! Because of its effect, I can select any Monster card in my deck and place it in my hand straightaway!”

Tenjouin and her colleagues watched the duel from the faculty room above the stadium.

“My student’s playing well, don’t you think, Tenjouin-san?” Ra Yellow dormmaster Abe said.

“Yes, very well,” Tenjouin said with a smile. “I’m sure we’ll get a good match n…”

Tenjouin cut herself off when Mark revealed his choice of card.

“I take the Blue Ice White Nights Dragon from my deck,” he announced. “And it goes to my hand.”

“Blue Ice…” Chiba gasped.

“…White Nights Dragon?!” Isabel finished.

“Impossible!” Katsuki and Aino shouted together.

Toragami's eyes widened; apparently, she couldn't hide her own impression.

While the rest of the audience was surprised utterly at Mark's acquisition of such an ultra rare card, Tenjouin, on the other hand, was horrified.

*How could he have that card?*

"It looks like that American boy got his hands on an interesting card," Chancellor Kiyotaki remarked.

"Kiyotaki-kouchou…" Tenjouin cast an accusatory glance at the Chancellor.

"I have nothing to do with what's in Mark-san's deck, Tenjouin-san," Kiyotaki said, raising his hands a bit defensively. "The fact is, his family has enough resources to send him to Duel Academia, so it should come as no surprise that he has access to such rare cards."

Tenjouin turned back to the duel and clenched one arm with the other. *Blue Ice White Nights Dragon… I used that card when I was a member of the Society of Light. As Kiyotaki-kouchou said, I was complicit in a plan to destroy the world…*

*Cards and decks hold memories, and that one holds a memory of a 'me' I do not wish to remember.*

*And it keeps coming back to haunt me… Why?*

Tenjouin squeezed her arm hard.

*Do you want me to use you again… White Nights Dragon?*

“So your plan is to use that card,” Toragami said. “But my turn has just begun. I summon from my hand, Lightlord Magician Leila in attack position.”

A black-haired woman wearing white religious robes and a cape and holding a jewelled wand materialized on the field.

***Lightlord Magician Leila** — LV4 Light Spellcaster (1700 ATK)*

“Leila!” Toragami commanded. “Attack my opponent directly. Light of Purity!”

Leila pointed her wand forward in front of her, and a blast of white light shot out of the orb, striking Mark’s chest. He staggered back as his life points dropped to 2300.

***Mark** — 4000 LP — 1700 — 2300 LP*

“I’ll set two cards facedown and end my turn,” Toragami went on. “And send three cards from the

top of my deck to the cemetery, due to Leila's effect."

A light shined from Toragami's Duel Disk, and her third and final Beast Wolf appeared on the field.

***Lightlord Beast Wolf*** *(2100 ATK)*

Mark blinked. "I thought you were going to show me something," he said. "Something about my belief not being enough."

"I already have," Toragami said. "You believed your Eingana would prevent me from using Judgment Dragoon's power. But it didn't stop me. And now you're relying on your deck to get you out of this situation. Am I right?"

"Well, I wouldn't be sure I'd have room to talk!" Mark chuckled. "By my count, you had nine cards left in your deck and four in your hand when you started your turn. And I knew what two of them were — Lightlord Beast Wolf and Lightlord Barrier.

"One of those facedowns is, of course, Lightlord Barrier, isn't it?"

"You're very perceptive," Toragami said. "In fact, I'm sure you've been verifying each and every card I've sent to the cemetery, haven't you?"

Mark stammered a bit. “W-well… yeah, of course.”

“Your eyes are on the past,” she replied. “Like most people, you look to things that have happened in the past to guide your future. That is why most humans are doomed to continually repeat the mistakes of history.”

“Now I know you’re trying to confuse me,” Mark said. “We’re having a friendly match here, so let’s just get on with it, shall we?”

“As you wish,” Toragami said.

*Of course, I’m really bluffing,* Mark said as he drew his card. *There’s no guarantee that either of Toragami’s cards are what I think they are. All I really know right now is that she has one Beast Wolf in her hand.*

He glanced through his hand. *I studied all of the Lightlord cards before preparing for this match. Most of Toragami’s most helpful cards are in her graveyard. I know I’m safe from Mirror Force. That went to the graveyard early in the match.*

Finally, Mark looked at the card he drew, and smiled broadly. *What am I worrying about, really?*

“First off, ‘Killer Snake’ goes from my cemetery back to my hand,” Mark said. “Then I activate from my hand, the spell card ‘Heavy Storm’!”

A wind began to whip through the arena.

“What a guy,” Katsuki said. “To get that card when he needed it the most!”

“Alright!” Isabel shouted, thrusting her hand into the air. “Fight, Mark!”

Toragami’s facedown cards were revealed before they were destroyed — ‘Lightlord Barrier’ and ‘Vanquishing Light’.

*‘Vanquishing Light’… that would have been an annoying card,* Mark thought to himself. *She could have tributed one of her monsters to negate the summon of mine. But now that that’s out of the way, I can proceed with my combo!*

“You only have five cards left in your deck,” Mark said. “Which means you have very little to choose from to deal with what I’m about to play!”

“He can’t be saying he’s going to summon the Blue Ice White Nights Dragon,” Aino said. “Even if he had Legendary City Atlantis in his hand, he still would need two sacrifices to get it out.”

“No!” Chiba shouted. “That’s not the goal of his deck. His true goal is…”

“I activate the spell card… ‘Raise Dead’!” Mark shouted, using its Japanese name. “And I use it to revive Rainbow Snake Eingana!”

The rainbow-colored snake unfurled itself on the field, hissing loudly.

***Rainbow Snake Eingana*** *(2200 ATK)*

“Next, I’ll put the spell ‘Big Wave Small Wave’ into play,” Mark announced triumphantly. “With this spell, I must destroy all water-attribute monsters I control, and for each one, I can Special Summon a water-attribute monster from my hand.”

Tenjouin gasped. “‘Destroy’? That means…”

Eingana’s hologram shattered into pieces, and another rainbow wave emanated from it.

“Rainbow Snake Eingana’s monster effect, activate,” Mark shouted. “When it’s destroyed in battle, or by any effect, all of my opponent’s monsters are immediately destroyed!”

Beast Wolf and Magician Leila were struck by the rainbow and were shattered as well.

The arena began to rumble with power once more.

“I have two cards in my hand,” Mark chuckled. “I could summon Killer Snake, but that would be a joke, wouldn’t it? No… the card I summon is a great elemental beast of pure power… unequaled in the world of water and ice!”

A bright light erupted in front of Mark, which once again temporarily blinded the audience.

“Come out, my ace of aces… Blue Ice White Nights Dragon!”

A sea of water congealed itself into ice and took the form of a winged dragon — one that bore remarkable resemblance to the legendary Blue-Eyes White Dragon. Its attack points, at 3000, were equal to that dragon’s, and its roar had a distinct sound that was like the Blue-Eyes, only hollow and echoic.

***Blue Ice White Nights Dragon*** *— LV8 Water Dragon (3000 ATK)*

“So his real plan was to revive Eingana and then destroy it while getting the White Night Dragon out,” Abe said. “Very good.”

Tenjouin hit the window with her fist and choked back a sob.

“Tenjouin-san?” Osiris Red headmistress Matsutani asked.

“It’s okay, Matsutani-san,” Kiyotaki said. “That monster just holds a special significance to Tenjouin-san.”

Tenjouin hadn’t remembered her past with the Society of Light, but it was flooding back to her quicker than she could handle. The deeds she had done while her heart had turned to ice… and the duel that shattered that ice.

*I had wanted to forget that part of my life,* she thought. *But you won’t let me make a mistake like running away from my past…*

*…would you, Judai?*

After his dragon was summoned, Mark blushed and rubbed the back of his head.

“Hey… that felt pretty good,” Mark grinned. “A guy could get used to this making speeches stuff.”

Toragami looked up at the beast and then back at her opponent. “So that was your true intention,” she

said. “I have to applaud you. It was a well thought-out strategy.”

“Thanks for the compliment!” Mark said. “But I wouldn’t say it’s over yet, would you? ‘It ain’t over until the fat lady sings!’”

“W… what?” Chiba blinked, utterly confused.

“It’s an American expression,” Isabel said, translating for him. “It means nothing’s over until the last move is played.”

“But, Toragami-san only has 3000 life points since she used Judgment Dragoon’s effect,” Chiba replied. “If Mark-san’s attack connects, it really is over!”

A glimmer appeared in Mark’s eye, and he prepared himself. “Blue Ice White Nights Dragon!” he commanded his creature. “Attack Toragami-san directly… White Night Lightning!”

The dragon roared and shot a chilling blast of energy at its opponent. Toragami stared down the blast directly, not moving as the blast exploded around her.

“*¡Dios mío!*” Isabel shouted.

“Mark…” Chiba muttered.

“…won?! That dog won?!” Katsuki yelled, pulling at her hair.

“No,” Aino said. “It’s not over.”

When the image of White Nights Dragon’s attack cleared, Toragami’s life point value was unchanged.

***Toragami*** *— 3000 LP*

“Are you wondering why I haven’t taken any damage?” Toragami said, and displayed a card from her hand to Mark.

Mark choked a bit. “Arcana Force XIV?!”

“That’s right,” Toragami said as she placed the card into her cemetery slot. “Arcana Force XIV — Temperance. By sending this card from my hand to the cemetery, I’ve negated the damage your dragon would have given me. It was a noble effort, but in vain.”

Tenjouin’s eyes rolled back and she swooned.

Abe ran to help her out. “Tenjouin-san, are you okay?”

“Arcana Force?” Tenjouin whimpered when she came to. “Toragami-san has those cards… why…”

Kiyotaki gripped his hands together. *First the 'Hierophant's Wand' and now Arcana Force cards. These apparent coincidences may not be coincidences at all. Given Tenjouin-san's extreme reactions… It would seem that Toragami Hinata may be the holder of that light…*

Mark gritted his teeth. "Damn it," he sighed. "I was hoping to end it now. But I'm not done yet! Turn end."

"My turn," Toragami said. "Draw. Since you have a monster and I have none, I can activate Cyber Dragon's special effect, Special Summoning it from my hand."

A white, metallic snake-like dragon machine appeared on the field.

***Cyber Dragon*** *— LV5 Light Machine (2100 ATK)*

"Now I'll sacrifice my Cyber Dragon to summon Lightlord Dragon Gragonith to the field."

The Cyber Dragon shimmered away to be replaced by the Lightlord's regal dragon, not as commanding a presence as the Judgment Dragoon.

***Lightlord Dragon Gragonith*** *— LV5 Light Dragon (2000 ATK)*

“Oh dear,” Chiba gasped.

“What is it, Chiba-kun?” Isabel said. “That Dragon can’t do anything at 2000 attack points.”

“It gains 300 attack points for every Lightlord in the cemetery, Isabel-san,” Chiba said. “Mark is in real trouble now. The Blue Ice White Nights Dragon can’t match that kind of power.”

“The Lightlords in my cemetery — Jean, Garoth, Leila, Luminous, Beast Wolf, Ehren, Raikou, Jenice and Cherubim — lend me your power to defeat the opponent in front of me!”

Gragonith’s power rose by 300 for each monster Toragami counted off — to 4700.

***Lightlord Dragon Gragonith*** *+2700 ATK (4700 ATK)*

Chiba’s eyes widened. “All those new Lightlords!” he shouted.

“As expected from the Blitzkrieg Queen, of course!” Katsuki chuckled. “That rat was just fooling himself to think he had a chance! Toragami-sama’s old deck was unbeatable, her new one even more so!”

“Lightlord Dragon Gragonith,” Toragami ordered her monster. “Destroy Blue Ice White Nights Dragon!”

Gragonith reared back and shot a blast of light at Mark’s dragon. It penetrated its chest, causing the ice around its body to shatter and for the dragon’s hologram to explode amid a stream of smoke.

Mark’s lifepoints took a hit as well, lowering to 600.

***Mark** — 2300 LP — 1700 — 600 LP*

“Lucky shot,” he muttered.

Toragami blinked. “So you still think it’s about luck,” she said.

“Luck is what drives this game, and I think you know that better than anyone,” Mark said. “You haven’t won yet, and on your end phase, you have to send three cards to the cemetery because of your Gragonith. That will leave you with just one card in your deck.”

“Gragonith has another effect,” Toragami reminded him. “In case you were thinking of laying that Killer Snake in defense position, it can penetrate defense.”

“You’re right,” Mark conceded. “I guess that means I have to rely on my deck to come through for me!”

“I end my turn,” Toragami said. “And as you said, I send the top three cards of my deck to the cemetery.”

Mark watched the cards she sent carefully. *Honest, Light Spiral and Charge of the Light Brigade*, he thought. *So she had a card like Honest. This girl is full of surprises. But she’s right. If I don’t draw something good right now, I’m doomed. But if I can just survive this turn…*

“My turn,” Mark shouted. “Draw!”

He glanced at his card and, once again, grinned widely. “Looks like luck is on my side after all,” he said. “I summon… Tribe-Infecting Virus in defense mode!”

A red gas cloud appeared on the field.

***Tribe-Infecting Virus*** *— LV4 Water Aqua (1000 DEF)*

Boos echoed in the auditorium from those familiar with the card.

“What a cheap card!”

“Go back to America!”

Mark smirked and rubbed his nose. “By discarding one card from my hand, this monster can destroy any type of monster I choose,” he said. “I send Killer Snake to the grave and choose Dragon types!”

The gas cloud spread across the field, covering Gragonith, who began to choke and cough. In an instant, its hologram vanished from the field.

“See there? Luck plays a powerful role in this game,” Mark said. “And you can’t win ’em all!”

Toragami glowered at her opponent. “What you call luck… can you really rely on that?” she said.

“Hunh?”

“What you’re talking about is not luck. It’s fate,” Toragami said. “And fate is predetermined. It cannot be altered. Until you understand that, you’re powerless to change it!”

“Wha…? Did you just say that you can’t change luck unless you know you can’t? I’m confused.”

“I’ll give you an example.” Toragami placed her hand on her deck. “There’s a card you need, and it’s in your deck, but you are unable to draw it.”

“We’ve all been in that situation,” Mark said. “But you’re bringing it on yourself by wrecking your own deck with your monsters!”

“On the contrary, I’ve ensured my win by doing so,” Toragami responded. “Because as I’ve sacrificed the cards in my deck, I’ve reduced the possibility of drawing cards I don’t need. And now that I only have one card in my deck, the chance that it is the card that I need…

“…becomes one hundred percent.”

Chiba gasped softly. Whatever he thought he saw before… he was definitely seeing it now. A light that shined around Toragami so brightly that it made her body look darker in comparison. But Aino, Katsuki and Isabel didn’t seem to notice.

“Draw!” Toragami shouted. “I summon Prophet of World Creation!”

A magician wearing a veil and holding a staff appeared on the field, light emanating from her.

***Prophet of World Creation*** *— LV4 Light Spellcaster (1800 ATK)*

“Is that the card you were waiting for?” Mark asked, confused.

“It is,” Toragami said. “Prophet of World Creation’s effect activates. By sending one other card in my hand, I can return a level 7 or higher monster in my cemetery to my hand. And, like you, I only have one other card.”

She sent the Lightlord Beast Wolf in her hand to the cemetery.

“You… you knew that card was at the bottom of your deck?” Mark grumbled.

“I did not ‘know’,” Toragami said. “Someone like you could not understand. You should simply accept your weakness! I return Judgment Dragoon to my hand, and summon it now!”

For the second time, the Judgment Dragoon ripped its way onto the duel arena.

***Judgment Dragoon*** *(3000 ATK)*

“This is bad,” Chiba said. “There’s nothing Mark can do to avoid losing now!”

“I never had any doubt,” Aino said. “Did you, Katsuki-chan?”

But Katsuki was already gone.

“Judgment Dragoon!” Toragami ordered. “Cleanse the field, and annihilate my opponent… with the light of truth!”

***Toragami** — 3000 LP — 1000 — 2000 LP*

The field once again became bleached in white as Mark’s Virus cloud was destroyed. He didn’t even have time to recover as Judgment Dragoon’s attack came quickly, a beam of condensed light that struck Mark with such force that he fell off his feet onto the ground.

***Mark** — 600 LP — 0*

The match was over, and Toragami had won.

“You were looking to the past, to the cards that I had buried,” Toragami said as Katsuki began removing her duel disk from her arm. “To be the victor, you must always look to the future, and to the victory that is yours. Otherwise, you will never be able to change your fate. Otherwise, you will always be a loser!”

Mark bit his lip. *Could Toragami be… cheating? No. She used an Academy Duel Disk, the same as me. But she somehow had faith in the cards up until the end. I was just hoping I’d get what I need. How… how can she do that?*

“That was awesome, Toragami-sama!” Katsuki squealed. “You put that losing dog in his place!”

Toragami didn’t respond, just turned away from her opponent and left the arena.

The announcer’s voice swum over the arena. “The winner and still undefeated, TORAGAMIII HINAAATA!”

Mark frowned and walked away from the arena, dejected. Chiba and Isabel met him.

“I’m sorry, Mark,” Isabel said in English. “It was really close.”

“How did she know what her last card would be?” Mark said quietly.

Chiba raised his voice to say something about what he saw, but thought it best to keep it to himself.

“She’s a great duelist,” Mark went on. “Like the other legendary duelists, she has total faith in her deck… not like me.”

“Mark…” Isabel said in a disappointed voice.

“I’m going back to my room,” Mark said. “I’ll see you guys later.”

Isabel watched Mark go. *His fighting spirit's gone…* she thought to herself. *He's lost before but he's never taken it like this. That Toragami really is fearsome…'*

---

After the duel, Asuka Tenjouin returned to her room and looked over her deck.

She had been working on it awhile, albeit not intending to duel with it, but now it seemed truly as though, like Kiyotaki said, the time was approaching where she'd have to use it.

A bad omen hung in the air.

Tenjouin's PDA rang, and she answered it, fearing the worst. "Hello?"

"Come to the medical office quickly," was the response on the PDA. The ID said it was from Ayukawa, but the voice didn't sound like hers.

"Who is this? What's going on?"

*click*

"Hello? Ayukawa-sensei? Hello?!"

No response.

Tenjouin felt a chill go through her. *It's Shougo-kun*, she thought to herself. *It has to be!*

She grabbed her deck and headed out the door.

---

"That was an awesome duel, wasn't it?" an Obelisk Blue student said to another, as they walked back to their room.

"I was scared!" the other replied. "I almost thought that that American guy had it in the bag! That Toragami-san is a demon!"

"No kidding."

But suddenly their path was blocked by an Osiris Red student.

"What do you want?" the taller one of them said.

"You were talking about Toragami," the Osiris said. "Where is she?"

The tall Obelisk chuckled derisively. "What, you want to challenge her? Don't make me laugh!"

"Where is she?!" the Osiris repeated, his tone becoming harsh.

“S-s-she just finished a duel with some Ra Yellow guy!” the shorter one stammered. “The whole school was watching! Weren’t you there?”

The Osiris was breathing heavily, as if he had been running for some time. He stepped out of the shadows he hid in.

The tall Obelisk gasped. “I know you… you’re…”

“I have some time to kill,” the student interrupted him. “How about I duel you two?”

The short student looked nervous. “Us? Come on, we’re tired. We just want to get back to our rooms.”

“Is that a no? Then I guess you lose by default.” He activated his duel disk and put a card on the panel.

Moments later, two screams were heard…

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster, “Prophet of World Creation”***
Level 4 Light Spellcaster, attack power 1800, defense power 600. By discarding 1 card from your

hand, add 1 Level 7 or higher Light-attribute monster from your cemetery to your hand.

---

***Chiba:*** *"It's an emergency! How terrible! Shougo-kun has vanished!"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"It's no mystery where he is. Students start to show up in the infirmary, apparently having dueled recently. They have no energy to even move…"*
***Isabel:*** *"Are you saying that Shougo-san's doing this? Impossible!"*
***Aino:*** *"Tenjouin-sensei struggles to find Shougo before Toragami-sama does, knowing if the two meet each other, an intense battle will begin."*
***Chiba:*** *"Shougo-kun!! Regain your true self! This is not who you are!"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero:*** **'A Desperate Search! Countdown to a Battle of Destiny'."**
***Tenjouin:*** *"Aoyama Shougo… I won't let Darkness swallow you whole! I'll definitely stop this!"*

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**SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION**

CARDS USED BY MARK WALKER:

**KILLER SNAKE (Sinister Serpent)**
*Effect Monster (L1 Water Reptile, 300/250)*
During your Standby Phase, if this card is in your cemetery, you can place it in your hand.

**RAINBOW SNAKE EINGANA**
*Effect Monster (L7 Water Sea-Serpent, 2200/2400)*
If this monster is destoyed and sent to the cemetery, destroy all monsters your opponent controls.

**DOWSING POINT (Drowsing Point)**
*Normal Trap*
If this face-down card is destroyed, select 1 Monster Card from your Deck and place it in your hand.

**BLUE ICE WHITE NIGHTS DRAGON (White Night Dragon)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Water Dragon, 3000/2500)*
Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card that targets this card and destroy it. When a face-up Monster you control is selected as an attack target, by sending one face-up Magic or Trap card you control to the cemetery, change the attack target to this card.

**HEAVY STORM**
*Normal Magic*

Destroy all Magic and Trap cards on the field.

**RAISE DEAD (Monster Reborn)**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 monster from either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

**BIG WAVE SMALL WAVE**
*Normal Magic*
Destroy all face-up Water-attribute monsters on your side of the field. Then you can Special Summon, from your hand, Water-attribute monsters up to the same number as the monsters destroyed by this card's effect.

**TRIBE-INFECTING VIRUS**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Aqua, 1400/1000)*
Discard 1 card from your hand and declare 1 Type of Monster. Destroy all face-up monsters of the declared Type on the field.

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CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI:

**JUDGMENT DRAGOON (Judgment Dragon)**
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Dragon, 3000/2600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except when

there are 4 or more unique “Lightlord” Monsters in your cemetery. By paying 1000 Life Points, destroy all cards on the field except this one. During your End Phase, send 4 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD MONK EHREN (Ehren, Lightsworn Monk)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Light Warrior, 1600/1000)*
I f this card attacks a Defense Position monster, return that monster to it’s owner’s Deck before damage calculation. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD BEAST WOLF (Wulf, Lightsworn Beast)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Beast-Warrior, 2100/300)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. When this card is sent from your Deck to your cemetery, Special Summon this card.

**LIGHTLORD BARRIER (Lightsworn Barrier)**
*Continuous Trap*
Send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery to negate an opponent’s attack against a “Lightlord” Monster you control.

**LIGHTLORD MAGICIAN LEILA (Lyla, Lighsworn Magician)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1700/200)*
You can change this card from face-up Attack Position to face-up Defense Position to destroy 1 Magic or Trap Card your opponent controls. If this effect is activated, this card's battle position cannot be manually changed until the end of your next turn. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**VANQUISHING LIGHT**
*Counter Trap*
Sacrifice 1 "Lightlord" Monster you control. Negate the Summon of a monster and destroy it.

**ARCANA FORCE XIV — TEMPERANCE**
*Effect Monster (LV6 Light Angel, 2400/2400)*
During either player's turn, you can discard this card from your hand to reduce Battle Damage from 1 attack to 0. When this card is Summoned, flip a coin and apply the appropriate effect:
— Heads: Halve all Battle Damage you take.
— Tails: Halve all Battle Damage your opponent takes.

**CYBER DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (LV5 Light Machine, 2100/1600)*

If you control no monsters and your opponent controls at least 1 monster, you can Special Summon this card from your hand.

**LIGHTLORD DRAGON GRAGONITH (Gragonith, Lightsworn Dragon)**
*Effect Monster (LV5 Light Dragon, 2000/1600)*
This card gains 300 ATK for each unique "Lightlord" Monster in your cemetery. When the ATK of this monster is higher than the DEF of a Defense-position monster it destroys, inflict the difference as Battle Damage to your opponent. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**HONEST**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Angel, 1100/1900)*
During your Main Phase, you can return this card from the field to its owner's hand. During the Damage Step of either player's Battle Phase, you can discard this card from your hand when a Light-attribute monster you control battles to raise its ATK by the ATK of the opponent's monster until the End Phase.

**LIGHT RESILIENCE (Light Spiral)**
*Continuous Trap*
When a card(s) is sent from your Deck to the

cemetery by a “Lightlord” monster’s effect, remove the top card of your opponent’s Deck from play.

**LIGHTLORD REINFORCEMENT (Charge of the Light Brigade)**
*Normal Magic*
Send the top 3 cards of your deck to the cemetery. Select 1 “Lightlord” monster in your Deck and place it in your hand.

**PROPHET OF WORLD CREATION (Herald of Creation)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1800/600)*
Once per turn, you can discard 1 card from your hand to add 1 Level 7 or higher monster from your cemetery to your hand.

# 18. A Desperate Search!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

*Special thanks to Eliteslayer and Nightmare Dreams who contributed a lot to this story.*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0**
***Turn Eighteen: "A Desperate Search! Countdown to a Battle of Destiny"***

---

Professor Asuka Tenjouin was helping school nurse Emi Ayukawa with the task of treating students that had been coming in since the morning. There were 12 students that had been brought in, mostly Obelisk Blue students, found unconscious in the dormitory grounds by other students. Reports of two more were coming in as well.

Tenjouin looked at the card Shougo left behind and gave a heavy-hearted sigh. The card was “Super Hot-Blooded Baseball Kid”.

“Do we know anything about what caused these students to end up like this?” Tenjouin asked Ayukawa.

“There doesn’t seem to be any witnesses,” Ayukawa said. “They were all found with their Duel Disks active, though. Some people are saying there’s a virus going around that is somehow triggered by the holograms. But most people don’t know that Aoyama-kun left here last night.” She kept her voice down for the last part.

*It’s Shougo without a doubt*, Tenjouin thought to herself. *I want to help the students here, but I have to find him too!*

“Tenjouin-sensei?” Ayukawa asked. “Should we cancel classes?”

“Oh… I’m sorry, Ayukawa-sensei,” Tenjouin said, snapping to attention. “Classes should go on as usual. There’s no need to send the students into a panic. Ayukawa-sensei, leave me a text message if other students come into the office.”

“Yes, sensei,” Ayukawa replied.

“And until we have concrete evidence otherwise, we should tell students to avoid dueling,” Tenjouin said. “Perhaps there’s something wrong with the Duel Disks that’s causing this.”

*…although I know in my heart it’s not true,* Tenjouin sighed to herself. *But, I can’t allow a panic that would turn into a witchhunt. I have to find him somehow.*

Ayukawa nodded. “Understood.”

---

Toragami had just gotten out of her room when she found the Obelisk Blue dormitories in pandemonium, people running about telling other people to watch out.

Katsuki and Aino approached her, Katsuki looking quite frazzled.

“It’s terrible, it’s an emergency!” Katsuki shouted. “People have been finding students on the ground, twitching, unconscious, totally out of it! There’s like fifty people in the infirmary now!”

“What do you think, Toragami-sama?” Katsuki asked.

“It’s him,” Toragami said. “It’s Shougo.”

“You think… Aoyama-kun did this?” Aino said. “But how? He’s unconscious.”

“Well, I went by the medical office between classes,” Katsuki said. “It’s a mess there, but one thing I did notice… the bed Shougo was in. He’s not there.”

“Is that so?” Toragami said.

“B-but… what could one thing have to do with the other?” Katsuki said with a laugh. “Toragami-sama, are you sure you’re not overestimating the kid?”

Toragami gave Katsuki a deadly glare.

“O… of course, I’m probably wrong!” Katsuki laughed uncomfortably. “Forget I said anything!”

“Toragami-sama, I think what Katsuki-chan means is… we just don’t understand your interest in the boy,” Aino said. “It would help us a little bit if we knew why you were so curious about his whereabouts.”

“Our battle has been fated,” Toragami said, crossing her arms. “Ever since that day…”

Katsuki opened her mouth to say something, but Aino nudged her hard, and they both nodded quietly.

“Come on,” Toragami told Aino and Katsuki. “We’re going to the medical office.”

---

The school day proceeded. There were a few other incidents, but as Ayukawa said, the idea that there was a sickness going around had been established in the school’s mind. As such, people were encouraged to keep their duel disks in their dorm room.

After Tenjouin’s class, she asked Chiba and Isabel to stay behind; they were the ones that had found that Shougo had disappeared the night before.

They were silent about the situation, although it troubled them, and Tenjouin wanted to tell them what was going on.

“Tenjouin-sensei,” Isabel asked, holding her arm nervously. “I heard that people were turning into the medical office unconscious without explanation. Is that true?”

Chiba’s eyes circled unsteadily as he spoke. “I don’t know why, but I feel as though Shougo is involved. I might be jumping to conclusions, but…”

“No,” Tenjouin replied. “I feel it, too. I think we need to find him, before anybody else makes the connection.”

“Is it that serious?” Chiba asked.

Isabel leaned forward and inquired, “Tenjouin-sensei, do you know something about what happened to Shougo-san?”

Tenjouin sighed and remembered her conversation with Chancellor Kiyotaki…

—

*Kiyotaki turned towards the window. “What I’m going to tell you… does not leave this room. Once*

*you exit my office, you officially have no knowledge of any of it. Are we clear?"*

*"I don't know if I can make that promise," Tenjouin said. "If any of your information can help Aoyama-kun, I have to share it."*

*"I wouldn't ask you to make this promise if I had that kind of information," Kiyotaki said. "All I can do is shed some light on what is happening."*

*Tenjouin sighed. "You're my superior, so I really have no choice in the matter, do I?"*

—

Still…

"The first thing to do is to find him," Tenjouin said, getting her things together. "We'll figure out what to do from there. Let's go."

Chiba and Isabel looked at each other and nodded.

---

There was an announcement over the loudspeakers placed around the Academia so that everyone could hear.

“Attention, all students! Attention, all students! It has come to our attention that a dangerous glitch exists with the current Academy Duel Disks and the new Destiny Hero cards.”

Two Ra students in a duel arena who were in the midst of dueling gasped, and immediately turned off their duel disks.

“Please report to the technology building and turn in your Duel Disk and you will receive a new one without the glitch shortly.”

An Osiris in the library moaned. “I don’t even know if I can afford that,” he whined.

“We repeat, a serious glitch in the current Academy Duel Disks…”

Toragami, Aino and Katsuki paused their approach to the medical office.

Katsuki patted her forehead mockingly. “Do they really expect people to believe that?”

“Well, it seems to be working,” Aino observed. “If all the students headed in that direction is any indication.”

Toragami paused and looked out the window at the sky. “You two should go too,” she said.

Katsuki blinked. “Toragami-sama?”

“I’m going to find Shougo,” Toragami went on. “You two go to the technology center.”

Katsuki nodded demurely, but Aino shook her head. “No.”

“Naomi-chan… wh-what are you saying?” Katsuki said uncomfortably, waving her arm dismissively.

“Toragami-sama, we’re still your friends,” Aino said. “And whatever’s going on, we’re not going to leave you alone to do it. If something were to happen to you, how do you think we’d feel, knowing we didn’t do everything possible to help you?”

Katsuki didn’t know whether to feel more aghast at Aino’s sudden outburst or at the fact that Toragami didn’t seem outraged at all by it. Nevertheless, there was a moment of uncomfortable silence.

Finally Toragami just closed her eyes and sighed. “Do what you want,” she said, walking off.

“Come on, Shiho-chan,” Aino said.

“Oh, man,” Katsuki groaned, but she went along with Aino.

---

“So where do we begin looking?” Isabel asked, looking around. “This is a big campus. Shougo-san could be anywhere.”

Tenjouin paused mid-step and turned to Chiba. “Chiba-san, you knew Shougo better than either of us. Do you have any ideas?”

“I don’t know, Tenjouin-sensei,” Chiba replied. “Shougo-kun might not be himself. I wouldn’t know where to begin looking.” He sighed.

“We have to save him no matter what happens,” Tenjouin said. “Can you think of anything at all?”

Chiba looked down and rubbed the back of his head.

“Chiba-san?”

“There’s one place that’s coming to my mind for some reason… but I don’t know why he would go there.”

“Go on?”

“When Shougo-kun dueled Toragami-san, it was by the lighthouse. He told me from time to time he thinks of that place. The way he spoke of it… I don’t

think he'd want to go there. But things being as they are now…"

Tenjouin snapped her head in the direction of the lighthouse and began to run there.

Chiba gasped. "Tenjouin-sensei! Wait!"

Isabel and he ran after her.

*The same lighthouse where I'd wait on word from my brother,* Tenjouin thought to herself as it ran. *It would be fitting, wouldn't it… if Shougo-kun were to be there?*

---

Chancellor Kiyotaki was filing paperwork in his office when he received a call from the medical office.

He picked up his PDA and put it to his ear. "Ayukawa-san, did the announcement go as planned?"

"Yes, Kiyotaki-sama," Ayukawa replied. "Most of the students are in the technical office turning in their Duel Disks."

"And Aoyama Shougo is still missing?"

“I believe that Tenjouin-sensei is looking for him.” Ayukawa’s voice turned lower and had a concerned tone. “Kiyotaki-sama, are you sure this is a good idea?”

“If ‘he’ had enough power to do anything more dangerous than steal some children’s energy, then I wouldn’t have asked you to worry about this,” Kiyotaki replied. “It will be fine, I’m sure. Even so, you shouldn’t stress any further. I’ll handle the rest.”

“Yes, sir,” Ayukawa said. “Will that be all, sir?”

“Thank you, Ayukawa-san. That will be all.”

Kiyotaki turned his chair towards the window and the view of the setting sun.

*I’m sure that Toragami-san will be looking for him as well,* he thought to himself. *It’s only a matter of who reaches him first. Will you have grown stronger by then, Aoyama Shougo?*

---

As the sun set over Duel Academia island, a lone figure leaned against the lighthouse tower as its beacon turned on for the night. He grinned and held out his arm, activating his Duel Disk.

Someone was coming.

“We expected you’d come earlier,” he said.

“Shougo-kun?” a female voice spoke. “What’s going on with you?”

“Oh, we’ve been just gathering energy,” Shougo said in a strange voice. “We’ve been expecting you. We’re ready to end this.”

“‘We’…? What do you mean…?”

“Tenjouin-sensei?” Shougo appeared shocked as he recognized the voice; his own reverted to the normal, nervous Shougo. ‘Tenjouin-sensei, go away, please!’ he shouted. “You… This isn’t where you want to be!”

“I’ve spent a lot of time at this lighthouse,” Tenjouin said with a soft smile as she approached. “It’s somewhat strange that you’d be here too, in the end.”

“Stay back!” Shougo shouted. “Don’t come any closer!”

“I know what happened to you,” Tenjouin replied calmly. “You’re being controlled by a dark power. The same one that took…” She paused and touched

her hand to her heart. “The same one that took my brother a long time ago. ‘Darkness’.”

Shougo’s eyes widened. “How do you know that name?”

“What did it promise you?” Tenjouin asked. “Power? Fame? Respect? Or perhaps… just a second chance for you.”

“Tenjouin-sama!”

Hinata Toragami ran onto the edge of the boardwalk, with Katsuki and Aino following her.

“So…” Tenjouin said. “You were waiting for *her*.”

“Tenjouin-sama… I do not have the time to explain, but you must step aside,” Toragami said. “Shougo is too much for you to deal with right now.”

“Is that Toragami-san talking?” Tenjouin asked. “Or is it the light inside you?”

Toragami gasped, her expression one of genuine surprise. “So… you knew?”

“Knew… what?” Katsuki turned to Aino. “What is she talking about?”

Aino crossed her arms. “I don’t know… but I have a feeling.”

“Is this what all of this is about?” Tenjouin asked, still facing Shougo. “The fearsome Light of Ruin against the despair of Darkness. They want to duel? And for this, they’ve taken over these two children?”

“You don’t understand,” Toragami whispered.

“I don’t understand?” Tenjouin shouted, turning to Toragami finally. “Why don’t you ask that ‘Light of Ruin’ what it turned me and my friends into? I’ve been trying my best to forget all of that… to believe that what I did wasn’t me, but…”

She narrowed her eyes and reflected on the past. “That cold kind of detachment… that belief in fate… I enjoyed it… I enjoyed not caring. It’s what the Light does to you. But once it goes away, it only leaves regret in its wake. Toragami-san… you need to cast off that power before it does the same to you.”

Aino looked at Toragami’s face and expression, as Toragami stood without a response. Through the light of the lighthouse, she could see something in her friend’s eyes.

*You look almost human right now, Hinata-chan,* she thought to herself.

“Are you going to stand in our way?” Shougo asked finally.

Tenjouin turned back towards her student. His head was lowered.

“The people we dueled before had very little spirit,” Shougo said, his voice starting to change again. “Even if we were to duel Toragami now, we might not have enough power. But you… you…”

He raised his head, and his eyes had completely changed. His expression, too, was free of any self-doubt.

“Once we defeat you, we’ll have the power to put out that loathsome light forever!”

Isabel and Chiba finally caught up with their teacher, and Isabel leaned forward to catch her breath.

“Stay back,” Aino warned the two. “This could get dangerous.”

“You found him!” Chiba shouted. “Shougo-kuuun!”

“I don’t know what’s going on,” Katsuki said with a shake of her head. “But whoever that is wearing Shougo’s face… that’s not Shougo.”

“What?” Chiba said, then looked at his friend. He gasped and fell back. The aura around him… that black, terrible aura couldn’t be denied.

“Sh… sh… Shougo-kun…”

“Chiba, *¿estás bien?*” Isabel asked reflexively.

Chiba blinked, not understanding Isabel’s language but understanding the context of her words. “I’m fine,” he replied in Japanese. “But something’s definitely wrong with Shougo-kun.”

*Whatever this aura is,* Chiba thought to himself. *I guess I’m the only one who can see it.*

“Tenjouin-sensei,” Shougo said in a dark, bleak voice. “If you’re going to duel me, you should know that this duel will be different from a usual duel.”

“A ‘Dark Duel’?” Tenjouin said, and then smiled slightly. “I’m familiar with those. Whatever it takes to get Shougo-kun back, I’ll do it.”

Shougo’s eyes narrowed. “So be it…”

Tenjouin pulled her deck from her side pocket, and fixed it into the duel disk in her arm. For a fleeting moment, she fought back a painful memory of her brother. She had almost lost him… she couldn't bear to lose another. No matter what it took, she would not lose this boy. Her eyes flashed up, as she blinked a lone tear away, activating her duel disk.

"Duel," they both shouted.

***Tenjouin: 4000 LP***
***Shougo: 4000 LP***

"I started our last duel," Shougo said as he took his hand. "I'll let you start this time, Tenjouin-sensei."

"Very well," Tenjouin said, drawing her card. "I'll summon to the field… Gemini Elves in attack mode."

A pair of elves, one blonde and one brunette, appeared on the field, holding hands, and raised their free arms in a battle position.

***Gemini Elves —*** *LV4 Light Spellcaster (1900 ATK)*

“This is one of the first cards I owned when I was young,” Tenjouin explained. “To me, it represents the bonds I feel with other duelists. Even while battling to defeat them, I still can feel the wave of their spirits. Like I feel yours, Aoyama-kun.”

“Really?” Shougo raised a brow skeptically. “With 1900 attack points, all I feel coming from that card is power.”

“I can’t understand your feelings, Aoyama-kun,” Tenjouin said. “But I know what you’re struggling with. I’ll wake up the tender soul inside you! I set two cards facedown. Turn end.”

*‘Gemini Elves’… that’s a strange card for Tenjouin-sama to play,* Toragami thought to herself. *It’s strong, but it has no effect. She’s not planning to lose this duel on purpose, is she? That will accomplish nothing!*

“Do you think you know me, Tenjouin-sensei?” Shougo said as he drew his card.

“No, I don’t,” Tenjouin replied. “But I would like to. I can tell, deep down inside, that the person that Aoyama Shougo used to be is still in there, fighting the darkness. And I’ll speak to him… to you… through this duel!”

“I’ll give you my response, then,” Shougo said. “I summon Newdoria in attack mode.”

***Newdoria*** *— LV4 Dark Demon (1200 ATK)*

“What’s he going to accomplish with that?” Katsuki asked questioningly as the gangly demon appeared on the field. “He’s a full 700 points weaker than Tenjouin-sensei’s Gemini Elves.”

“He’s going to use its special effect,” Toragami explained. “When Newdoria is destroyed in battle, the controller can destroy one monster on the field.”

“So he’d use up 700 points just to get rid of one monster?” Katsuki scoffed. “And this is the kid everyone’s afraid of?”

“Tenjouin-sama is mistaken if she thinks something else is controlling Shougo,” Toragami said. “My opponent was also willing to burn his life away to attempt to decide the match quickly. But against Tenjouin-sama, surely…”

“Newdoria,” Shougo shouted. “Attack Tenjouin-sensei’s Gemini Elves!”

“I know your plan, and I won’t let it happen.” Tenjouin shouted, hitting a button on her duel disk.

“Reverse card open… ‘Doble Passe’! When you attack my monster, I take the hit instead!”

“No!” Shougo shouted. “Newdoria, cancel your attack!”

“You fool,” Toragami said to herself. “It’s too late.”

“W… why would Shougo *do* that?” Katsuki said, confused. “He’s going to take damage anyway!”

“Maybe you just misjudged Shougo-san all along,” Isabel spat back, clenching a fist and frightening Katsuki momentarily. “Ever thought of that?”

Newdoria bypassed the Gemini Elves and struck Tenjouin full-on in the chest. Tenjouin’s eyes bugged and she staggered backward, feeling a pain in her heart. She coughed hard and clutched her chest as she lost 1200 life points.

***Tenjouin:*** *4000 LP -1200 — 2800 LP*

“Tenjouin-sensei!” Chiba shouted. “Are you okay?”

“This is what I was afraid of,” Toragami said. “This isn’t an ordinary duel anymore. Now no one can stop it.”

“What are you talking about, Toragami-sama?” Katsuki asked.

“When the power of darkness is released, reality and imagination become one and the doors to chaos open,” Toragami replied. “And Tenjouin-sama is feeling the real pain of that monster’s attack. But the reason he tried to call off the attack was not because he would hurt Tenjouin-sama.”

“When I activate ‘Doble Passe’, I’m not the only one that takes damage,” Tenjouin said after a deep exhale. “The monster you attacked gets to hit you directly in exchange. Gemini Elves… go!”

The blonde Elf turned to the brunette, who nodded. Then the blonde leaped and launched a flying chop attack to Shougo’s body. Shougo winced and reached for his shoulder as his life points took a hit — more damage than he had dealt to his teacher.

***Shougo:*** *4000 LP -1900 — 2100 LP*

“I’ll set one card facedown,” Shougo said. ‘Turn end.’ His voice reverted to normal for a moment. “Tenjouin-sensei, please… my battle is not with you.”

“And this school isn’t a playground for you to have your battle with someone you imagine to be

your rival," Tenjouin replied as she reached for her deck. "I must stop you no matter what the cost. No… I must stop Darkness!"

"You can't!" Shougo said. "Nobody can!"

"It's my turn," Tenjouin shouted. "Draw!"

She looked at her hand. "Great," she said. "Maybe you'll hear me with this. I summon Cyber Tutu in attack mode!"

The ballerina girl appeared on the field, looking as though she were ready for a dance.

***Cyber Tutu*** *— LV3 Earth Warrior (1000 ATK)*

"You remember Cyber Tutu's effect from our last duel?" Tenjouin asked. "Newdoria's 1200 attack points are higher than hers, so she can attack you directly. Go, Cyber Tutu… Nouvelle Point!"

Cyber Tutu spun past Newdoria and launched a spinning kick on Shougo's body, but just then a furred creaure flew out of Shougo's Duel Disk and took the hit head on. "Kuri!" it groaned as it was destroyed.

"Then you must remember this move as well," Shougo said. "I discard Kuriboh from my hand to negate the damage from your attack."

Tenjouin eyed her opponent pensively. *As I thought. He's trying to get that monster out again… the Dark Armed Dragon. It must be in his hand. If I destroy Newdoria with my Gemini Elves, he will be that much closer to being able to summon it. Not only that… he'll no doubt destroy my Elves with Newdoria's effect. I can't count on destroying Dark Armed Dragon with Cyber Blader like I did last time.*

"I end my turn," Tenjouin finally said.

Shougo appeared unsteady as he reached for his deck. "My turn… draw." He narrowed his eyes. "Tenjouin-sensei… why did you come? Why did you make me do this…?"

"Shougo-kun… *you* called *me*," Tenjouin said. "Don't you remember? When you left the medical clinic… you called me using the nurse's cell phone. You wanted me to find you, so I could help you."

"Don't joke around!" Shougo said sharply, clenching his fists and tensing his body. 'You got yourself into this! Don't try to make this my fault!' He pointed at Tenjouin's side of the field. "Now, Newdoria… your attack target…"

His finger moved toward Cyber Tutu, who cowered in fear. But then he smirked and moved it to the elves.

“…are the Gemini Elves!”

The demon leaped forward and was prepared to claw at Tenjouin’s twin elves.

“Still at that?” Katsuki spat. “What a kid.”

The elves both kicked Newdoria away, and it shattered into pieces. Shougo grit his teeth as his life points fell. However, the studded ornaments of its costume remained and launched at the elves.

“Now, I’ll activate Newdoria’s effect, and destroy your believed bond with me… the Gemini Elves!”

The ornaments crashed against the Elves, who screamed as they exploded against their bodies. They dropped to the ground and their images faded away.

Tenjouin looked in horror at their fading images. *Could it be they really felt that, like I really felt the damage I took? Please forgive me… I didn’t think he’d go this far.*

“I’m going to end my turn, and then I’m going to ask you a question,” Shougo said. He stared at his

teacher with a steel gaze. “Have you thought this duel through completely yet?”

Tenjouin stopped before she drew her card. “What do you mean?”

“If you happen to defeat me, what do you think will happen to me?”

Tenjouin gasped as the realization sunk in.

Shougo chuckled with mirth. “This is a Dark Duel,” he said. “Only the winner can walk out alive. The loser… will die.”

Tenjouin grit her teeth. “In other words, if I win…”

“That’s right. You’ll lose the very person you’ve been trying to protect.”

“In that case, I’ll figure out a way to save you through this duel,” Tenjouin shouted with determination as she pulled her card. “And convey our feelings to you. You’re not alone… Shougo-kun!”

Shougo chuckled again, putting his hand to his head. Then he started to laugh. Slowly at first, then wilder, and uncontrollably.

“What’s so funny?!” Tenjouin shouted.

Shougo continued to laugh, his hand on his face covering one eye. Chiba and Isabel looked at the boy they had thought they knew, now cackling like a madman. Eventually, Shougo recovered his wits and, keeping his one eye covered, stared again at his teacher through the other one.

“‘You’re not alone’… yes, that’s right, Tenjouin-sensei. I’m not alone. I have an ally that will never leave me.”

Tenjouin smiled. “So you understand…”

Shougo moved his hand off of his face, but his hair covered his eye. “Of course… I’ve always understood. My ally… is ‘Darkness’.”

He then brushed his hair aside, and it was clear that his eyes were empty and unfeeling.

“Because… I *am* Darkness.”

“No…” Tenjouin gasped.

Aino’s eyes widened in horror. “Shougo is…”

“‘Darkness’?” Katsuki was confused, which added to her ever-growing sense of fear.

"No way…" Chiba said. *That means, this aura I felt… could it be? Has Shougo-kun really been… this thing called 'Darkness' all along?*

Toragami just stared at Shougo bitterly.

Shougo cackled again, his laugh being the only one other than the ocean splashing against the island that could be heard.

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *The Normal Monster, "Gemini Elves"***
Level 4 Earth Spellcaster, attack power 1900, defense power 900. Among the strongest of the normal monsters available, these creatures can hold the opponent off easily while you get a stronger monster.

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***Tenjouin:*** *"Wake up, Shougo-kun!"*
***Aino:*** *"Aoyama-kun's soul is a victim to the power called 'Darkness'."*
***Shougo:*** *"That's right… Darkness and I… we are one…"*
***Chiba:*** *"It seems the harder Tenjouin-sensei fights, the more Shougo-kun seems to fall into the*

*darkness."*
***Toragami:*** *"There is only one way to win this battle. Realize this, Tenjouin-sama!"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero:*** **'White Night Heart: Asuka's Compromise'**.*"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"I was always being saved from despair by others. I'll show that I have learned from them, and fight despair my own way! I'll cut through the cold night… and surely save you, Shougo-kun!"*

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**SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION**

CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:

**GEMINI ELVES (Gemini Elf)**
*Normal Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1900/900)*
Elf twins that alternate their attacks.

**DOBLE PASSE**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when a monster your opponent controls attacks a monster you control. The attack becomes a Direct Attack to your Life Points. The attack target then immediately attacks the opponent's Life Points directly.

**CYBER TUTU**
*Effect Monster (L3 Earth Warrior, 1000/800)*
If your opponent only controls monsters with ATK higher than the ATK of this card, you may attack your opponent directly with this Monster.

CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**NEWDORIA**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, destroy 1 monster on the field.

**KURIBOH**
*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Demon, 300/200)*
When your opponent attacks you during their Battle Phase, you may discard this card from your hand to make the Battle Damage from that attack 0.

# 19. White Night Heart

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to leave me your comments. Thank you very much for reading.*

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"Now, I'll activate Newdoria's effect," Shougo shouted. "And destroy your believed bond with me… the Gemini Elves!"

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"I'm going to end my turn, and then I'm going to ask you a question," Shougo said. He stared at his

teacher with a steel gaze. “Have you thought this duel through completely yet?”

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**YU-GI-OH! -0**
***Turn Nineteen: “White Night Heart: Asuka’s Compromise”***

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***Tenjouin*** *— 2800 LP*
***Shougo*** *— 1400 LP*

“You know it, don’t you, Tenjouin-sensei? There was a person named Aoyama Shougo some fifteen years ago. But he perished, along with everybody else! For a moment, there was unity! And then that boy, Yuki Judai, ruined everything!”

“No!” Tenjouin shouted. “Judai saved everyone from your curse! You led everyone to believe that despair was the only unity possible. You misled Fujiwara-san… and my brother… and you used your power to seal everyone in your terrible illusion. But Judai was able to stop you.”

“Yes, it’s true, the souls that Darkness took did return,” Shougo said quietly. “But one person’s despair was too great. He didn’t want to return to a world that would always look on him as a loser. So great was his sorrow… that we knew his soul would be suitable as our own.”

“You’re lying!” Tenjouin said. “I dueled Shougo-kun when he came to the island. He had the spirit and the drive to win. He gave it all he had against me!”

“Yes… it’s true,” Shougo said. “There was a time when I really believed… I could forget about the reason I came back, and just live as a duelist. I

almost believed… that I could change. People like you, and Chiba-san…”

He shook his head.

“No, it was all a lie… an illusion I made up for myself. Unless I give up the idea that I’m a kind, warm-hearted person, I’ll always be a loser.”

“Shougo-kun, that’s not true and you know it!” Chiba shouted.

“No,” Toragami said with a steady tone. “He’s right.”

Chiba blinked. “Huh?”

Toragami explained. “I recognized his power from the beginning. The power of ‘Darkness’. The one that always threatens to sink the world into the pits of despair. The light that I hold… it can destroy it permanently. That’s why I wanted to battle him at his full strength… not as the child he was pretending to be.”

“Yes,” Shougo murmured, as his voice shifted pitch again. “I really should thank you, Toragami. You woke me up. I’ll show my gratitude by destroying you myself.”

“No!” Tenjouin shouted. “Both of you, stop saying such ridiculous words!”

She gripped the cards in her hand intensely.

“You both are children,” Tenjouin went on. “Whatever power’s controlling your minds is confusing you, but you both are still free to choose your own paths in this world. As duelists, and as human beings. There’s no reason to feel such destructive impulses.”

Toragami didn’t respond, but her expression softened ever so slightly. Aino and Katsuki were shocked. For Toragami to show such deference to anyone was unusual.

“In case you’ve forgotten, Tenjouin-sensei,” Shougo said. “We’re in the middle of a duel. If you don’t make your move soon, it will be considered a forefeit.”

“I haven’t forgotten,” Tenjouin said with a nod. “I summon Blade Skater in attack mode.”

The striking-looking figure skater spun her way onto the field.

***Blade Skater*** *— LV4 Earth Warrior (1400 ATK)*

“It’s strange that I think of it now, but I originally wanted to be a dancer,” Tenjouin mused. “As time went on, my deck reflected that. Your deck reflects something too, doesn’t it, Shougo-kun? I know you can understand at least that much.”

“I don’t care about any of that,” Shougo replied. “Make your move.”

*If both my monsters attack, Shougo will lose this duel and his life,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *I can’t take that chance just yet.*

“Cyber Tutu, attack my opponent directly! Nouvelle Point!”

The ballerina spun and struck Shougo with her legs. This time, the attack connected, and Shougo reeled back, coughing hard as his life points dropped to 400.

***Shougo** — 1400 LP — 1000 — 400 LP*

“I end my turn,” Tenjouin said.

“Are you serious?” Katsuki shouted. “Why didn’t she attack with Blade Skater? Is she that afraid of Shougo’s facedown card?”

“It’s not just that she’s playing it safe,” Chiba observed. “Look at Blade Skater’s body; her arms

and legs have blades.”

“And the damage in this duel seems to be real,” Isabel added. “Shougo’s barely hanging in there, and Tenjouin-sensei looks a bit flush, too.”

“It’s an act,” Toragami said.

“What?” Chiba and Isabel exclaimed in unison .

“Shougo is trying to put Tenjouin-sama off balance. He knows she’s trying to save him. This is all a psychological game to him. Her feelings are not reaching him. The more she tries, the more she falls into his trap.”

“Stop saying such awful things about Shougo-kun!” Chiba demanded. “You don’t know him the same way we do.”

“You’re only reacting emotionally to the truth,” Toragami said. “You know very well that none of us know him at all.”

“That’s right,” Shougo said through sharp breaths. “None of you know me. You haven’t had to endure the same things I have. No matter how much you think we’re friends, I only see all of you as opponents.”

“Shougo-kun…” Chiba realized Shougo was choosing his words to hurt Chiba specifically, and that thought in itself hurt. *You’re not the person I believe is my friend, Shougo-kun.*…

Shougo ignored it, though. “My turn. Draw!” He then chuckled. “You’ve been taking it easy on me, haven’t you, Tenjouin-sensei? You did then, and you still are now. You don’t take me seriously as a duelist. You’ll regret that in the next world.”

A tremor went through Tenjouin and everyone watching. A strange, ethereal fire enclosed them, distorting the surroundings.

“I activate Foolish Burial, and send Diabolicguy from my deck to my grave,” he announced. “And with three Dark-attribute monsters in my cemetery, that means I can summon my ultimate dragon!”

A deep rumble in the earth…

Shougo pointed to the sky and shouted dramatically. “In time, all things return to Darkness! Demonstrate my meaning! Show yourself… Dark Armed Dragon!”

The dragon burst through the boardwalk and roared. Tenjouin and Shougo both struggled to regain their footing.

***Dark Armed Dragon*** *— LV7 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

Chiba looked at the monstrous dragon. “That card… it’s the one that’s caused people to bear so much resentment against Shougo. If Red-Eyes represents Shougo’s hope, then Dark Armed Dragon is surely his despair.”

“He hasn’t changed at all,” Toragami said. “He is still going for the easy setup. He thinks that dragon will decide the game.”

“But he’s won many times without it!” Isabel protested. “How can he still think that?”

“He’s not thinking,” Toragami said. “‘Darkness’ is fueling his mind and heart.”

“What do you know about ‘Darkness’, Toragami-sama?” Katsuki asked. “And what is that light that Aoyama-kun and Tenjouin-sensei mentioned earlier?”

“‘Darkness’ is death and destruction,” Toragami said. “It brings annihilation to all individual things. It’s a terrible force. And if Tenjouin-sama loses here, it will probably swallow us all next.”

“And what about the light?” Aino went on.

“This is not the time to worry about me,” Toragami replied flatly.

“That facedown is ‘Prima Light’, without a doubt,” Shougo said. “So I’m gonna get rid of that Blade Skater first! Attack, Dark Armed Dragon! Dark Armed Punisher!”

With a loud roar, the dragon crashed its fist against Blade Skater. She spat blood from her mouth as her body crumpled under its power, eliciting genuine horror from the observers and particularly from Tenjouin.

“My Blade Skater…” Tenjouin whispered as her life points fell. “She was in pain…”

“And now as for that ‘Prima Light’,” Shougo went on. “I’ll remove Kuriboh from play to destroy it!”

Kuriboh floated on the field and then wailed painfully as it was transformed into dark energy that fueled Dark Armed Dragon’s fists.

Tenjouin’s head was lowered; she still appeared to be in shock.

Shougo’s eyes widened madly. “Dark… GENOCIDE!”

Tenjouin raised her head a bit. “I took a terrible chance,” she let slip. “But it worked out for me.”

“What?”

“This is for you… Blade Skater,” Tenjouin whispered, and then her body straightened out. “Reverse card open… ‘Pure Pupil’! When an opponent’s monster activates its effect while I control a monster with 1000 attack points or less, that effect is negated, and the monster is destroyed!”

Shougo’s face flared hard as light shot out from Cyber Tutu. It struck Dark Armed Dragon and its body started to become bleached white. Its body fell forwards and caused a rumble in the boardwalk again, and it turned into a black liquid which sunk into the ocean.

“You damn useless beast,” Shougo shouted, and then turned to Tenjouin. “How could you destroy my dragon? People feared me because of him!”

“But you never wanted anyone to fear you,” Tenjouin said. “You wanted respect, Shougo-kun, and you never needed Dark Armed Dragon to get it. You’ve proved that time and again.”

“Tenjouin-sama, this isn’t the time to be gentle to your opponent!” Toragami shouted. “Do you think

he doesn’t know that you’re holding back?”

Tenjouin turned her head back. “Toragami-san?”

“Shougo is lying to you,” Toragami asserted. “It is as he said. The power of ‘Darkness’ and him are one. Therefore, even if you defeat him here, he won’t die.”

Tenjouin paused in her tracks. She wanted to believe Toragami’s words, but it was impossible to be sure.

“I know the reason why you won’t play the cards in your hand!” Toragami went on. “But you have to forget about your heart that was scorched by the light, and push forward!”

Tenjouin grit her teeth. “How can you say that, Toragami-san?” she said. “You don’t know what that light almost did to the world…”

“Of course I know,” Toragami said. “I am familiar with the power of that light… the Light of Ruin…”

“The ‘Light of Ruin’?” Chiba asked.

“Don’t act surprised, Chiba-san,” Toragami said. “You could see it in my battle aura. You know all about this power. As do you… Tenjouin-sama. You

have to freeze your heart of its emotions if you want to defeat Shougo!”

“Hey, hey, now’s not the time to be so easygoing,” Shougo shouted. “I’m your opponent here! I’ll activate D-HERO Diabolicguy’s effect now. By removing it from play in my cemetery, I can Special Summon one from my deck.”

The Destiny Hero arose on the field and drew its arms in front of it.

***D-HERO Diabolicguy*** *— Dark Warrior (800 DEF)*

“Because its attack points are 800, Cyber Tutu won’t be able to make a direct attack,” Shougo said. “If you’re going to hit me, you’ll have to get through this monster first. I set one card facedown. Turn end!”

“My turn,” Tenjouin said. “Draw!”

“Toragami’s right, you know, Tenjouin-sensei?” Shougo jeered. “If you really want to save me, you’ll have to use all the power you put into that deck. You’ll have to surrender to that despair of the ‘you’ that you wanted to forget, make your heart cold and strike me down with all your might! But

then, what kind of teacher would that make you… am I right, Tenjouin-sensei?”

Tenjouin’s eyes widened as she recalled the nightmare she was locked in after Darkness had defeated her in the past. Children telling her she couldn’t possibly teach anyone how to rise above their faults and become good duelists. Ironically, when she was rescued, it was that nightmare that caused her to strive even harder to become a professor.

All of a sudden, though, that hopelessness was revisited on her, and she questioned whether she was capable of calling herself a teacher if she couldn’t save one boy.

“Tenjouin-sensei!” Chiba shouted.

“Tenjouin-sensei!” Isabel cried.

“Tenjouin-sensei…” Aino and Katsuki added.

“TENJOUIN-SAMA!” Toragami shouted.

Tenjouin was shot out of her haze by her students calling for her.

*That’s right,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *I can call myself a teacher. These students are counting on me. I have to do what I can to save them, just as I*

*myself was saved many times by others in the past. It's my turn now!*

She looked at her hand. *I'm not sure what I can do, though, without harming Shougo-kun,* she thought. *He doesn't have many Life Points yet, and if I defeat him, I'm not sure what will happen to him. But what if Toragami-san is right…*

*No! It's not true! I have to find a way to save him!*

She looked at the card she drew. It was the card Shougo had left behind. *Perhaps, this will get my message through,* Tenjouin thought.

"I summon Super Hot Blooded Baseball Kid in defense mode," she declared, as the cartoonish looking monster appeared on the field.

***Super Hot Blooded Baseball Kid*** *— Fire Warrior (1000 DEF)*

Shougo laughed derisively. "So you kept that card that I left?" he shouted. "I left it for a reason! I didn't want weak trash like that in my deck anymore!"

"What are you saying, Shougo-kun?" Chiba replied from the sidelines. "Did you forget… you beat me with that card!"

“Don’t even kid!” Shougo shouted back. “You took it easy on me too! You could have beat me with your third Command Knight, but you didn’t attack with her! Why?”

Chiba gasped and rubbed the back of his head, dumbfounded. *I… in my rush, I must have forgotten about that,* he thought to himself. *Oh my… I feel terrible!*

“In any case,” Tenjouin said. “Wouldn’t you have thrown away that card if you really felt that way about it? You kept it in your deck up until now.”

“Only because I still harbored illusions about who I was.” Shougo clenched his fists and then practically threw them outward. “I’m done with those now! I know who I really am!”

Tenjouin sighed in frustration. *Why can’t I get through to him?*

“Cyber Tutu,” she ordered. “Destroy Diabolicguy!”

Shougo merely chuckled as his Destiny Hero was destroyed.

“What?! Tenjouin-sensei… you could have won this turn!” Katsuki shouted. “What are you

thinking?”

Isabel snapped her head in Katsuki’s direction. “What do you think? She’s trying to save him! If she wins this duel, Shougo will die!”

Toragami sighed deeply. *Tenjouin-sama… this isn’t working,* she thought to herself. *When are you going to realize that the only way to get through to this boy is to defeat him? Place your all in victory. That is your only hope…*

“Are you just about through insulting me?” Shougo said with narrowed eyes. “I’ll send you all to hell! My turn… draw!”

He glanced at his hand and chuckled evilly. “You shouldn’t have given me the chance to turn this around,” he smirked. “Now victory is mine! I play the continuous magic card, ‘Soul Absorption’!”

The image of the card appeared on the field. “Now I gain 500 life points each time a card is excluded from the game,” Shougo explained. “Which is really handy to me right now. I activate D-HERO Diabolicguy’s effect! When he’s in the cemetery, I can exclude him from the game to summon another one from my deck!”

Shougo's deck glowed and surrounded him with a thin film of light, raising his life points up to 900.

***Shougo —*** *400 LP + 500 — 900 LP*

Shortly thereafter, the Destiny Hero appeared on the field.

***D-HERO Diabolicguy*** *(800 DEF)*

"Now, I'll sacrifice Diabolicguy," Shougo said. "And summon Wicked Emperor Gaius!"

"An Emperor card?!" Katsuki shouted, her expression suddenly changing. "H… he's serious!"

An armored tower of a being, dressed in black armor and surrounded by black electric energy emerged on the field.

***Wicked Emperor Gaius*** *— LV6 Dark Demon (2400 ATK)*

"Now that I've summoned Gaius, I can remove from play one card on the field. Hmm, what will it be?" He scanned Tenjouin's field and grinned maliciously. "I could erase your Cyber Tutu and cause you despair, but no… I think I'll exclude that worthless card of mine. Gaius, your target… is Baseball Kid! Go, Darkness Edict!"

Gaius raised its arm and clenched its fist, shooting a bolt of dark lightning which opened a black portal under which he was pulled in, screaming in panic. Tenjouin's eyes shimmered.

Shougo chuckled as his life points raised up by 500 due to Soul Absorption.

***Shougo*** *— 900 LP + 500 — 1400 LP*

"Of course, Baseball Kid's fate seems almost merciful compared to what's next," Shougo declared. "Gaius! Destroy her Cyber Tutu! Nightmare Death!"

Gaius created a dark ball of power and hurled it at Cyber Tutu. She shrieked and fell to the ground at its impact. Like Blade Skater, Tutu hacked up some blood as she fell, her body twitching and her arm gripping her chest as she faded away. The visual shocked everyone present. Even Toragami winced a bit.

***Tenjouin*** *— 2800 LP — 1400 = 1400 LP*

Tenjouin felt emotionally wrecked. *Why? Why do the monsters feel so real?… Like living and breathing* people*? It's making me think twice before putting them in danger.*

“I’ll set one card and end my turn,” Shougo said.

Tenjouin exhaled sharply. “My turn… draw!”

*I have no choice but to get this duel going,* she thought to herself. *I want to help Shougo-kun but… if things keep going this way, everyone here will be in danger.* She looked at her hand and noticed the card she’d drawn…

“Magic card activate… ‘Spellbooks Inside the Pot’!” Tenjouin declared. “Both players draw three cards from their deck.”

“I see you’re still not serious,” Shougo said as he pulled his cards. “Are you so sure you want to give me such a gift?”

“Think what you like,” Tenjouin replied, retreiving her own cards. She glanced at her new cards…

*No… not this! Not now!*

One of the cards was “White Veil”.

*How could I draw this card now of all times? I… I can’t use this card! I’d regress all the way back to… no, I don’t… I can’t…*

Toragami noticed Tenjouin's change of posture. "Tenjouin-sama," she said. "You can't be afraid."

"Toragami-san?"

"Put your feelings aside and use the card," Toragami replied. "There is too much at stake *not* to."

"No!" Tenjouin shouted. 'No!' She hugged herself, feeling cold suddenly. "I can't go back down that road. I may go all the way back and…"

"You need to think clearly," Toragami replied. "This is what he wants… for you to doubt yourself and hold back, not do your best to win. But just remember what's at stake, Tenjouin-sama. You must put away your fears and do your best."

*No… I can do my best, but that does not involve using this card,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *Besides, the other cards I've drawn will turn this game around for me anyway.*

"I summon Cyber Petit Angel in defense mode," Tenjouin announced as the cute monster with only a head and limbs appeared, holding a bow and arrow.

***Cyber Petit Angel** — LV2 Light Angel (200 DEF)*

“And its effect activates. I place one Machine Angel Ritual from my deck to my hand.” Scanning her deck, she replaced the required card in her hand. “And I’ll activate it now!”

Twin mechanical pillars topped with flame rose on the field behind Tenjouin.

“Cyber Prima… Cyber Petit Angel… lend me your power to revive the machine goddess!” Tenjouin shouted. She then slapped the ritual card down on her Duel Disk. “Show yourself… Cyber Angel Dakini!”

Prima appeared beside Petit Angel atop the flaming pillars and they both turned into points of light that met on the field, and the four-armed figure of Dakini, wielding a staff in two hands and swords in each of her other hands, appeared.

***Cyber Angel Dakini*** *— LV7 Light Angel (2700 ATK)*

“Now, Dakini’s effect activates,” Tenjouin went on. “You select a monster on your side of the field and Dakini automatically destroys it. You only have one monster, Shougo-kun, so Dakini destroys Wicked Emperor Gaius!”

Shougo glared at the fading body of his monster. “Tch, what a worthless thing,” he spat.

“You don’t have time to look down on your monsters,” Tenjouin reminded him. “With your field clear, Dakini now will attack you directly. Go, Cyber Angel Dakini! Angelic Cut!”

Tenjouin’s monster twirled her swords acrobatically and leapt onto Shougo’s side of the field to execute her attack. But Shougo didn’t look worried.

“Reverse card… open!” he snarled. “‘Drain Shield’!”

“W… what?” Tenjouin shocked. “No!”

“I’m afraid so! My life points will raise up… by the attack of your monster! Which means, you’ve just handed me what I need to stay in this fight! Thank you very much, sensei!” He began to laugh aloud once again as Dakini struck the shield generated by his trap.

***Shougo*** *— 1400 LP + 2700 — 4100 LP*

*No… If I had equipped her with White Veil…* Tenjouin shuddered violently at the realization. *If I had equipped Cyber Angel Dakini with White Veil…*

*I would have won. Now I don't know what will happen!*

"I end my turn," Tenjouin said flatly.

"Hmph," Shougo said. "In that case, before I begin mine, I'll reveal my other facedown. 'Blazes of Demise'! And summon two Demise tokens." The odd creatures cackled as they emerged on the field.

***Demise Token** — LV1 Dark Demon (0 DEF)*
***Demise Token** — LV1 Dark Demon (0 DEF)*

"That can only mean he's planning on sacrificing them for something big," Chiba said timidly. "Tenjouin-sensei might be in trouble…"

"Draw!" Shougo shouted. "And I sacrifice the two tokens to summon Dark Angel Zerato!"

Once again the panels on the boardwalk seemed to break as Shougo's angel monster tore through from below. It unsheathed its sword and posed menacingly.

***Dark Angel Zerato** — LV8 Dark Angel (2800 ATK)*

"Dark Angel Zerato, attack Dakini!" Shougo ordered, not wasting any time. "Wicked Wave!"

Tenjouin didn’t look up as Zerato’s sword wave broke across Cyber Angel Dakini’s body, causing her to drop her weapons, fall on one knee and crumple. “I’m sorry,” was all she could manage.

***Tenjouin*** *— 1400 LP — 100 — 1300 LP*

“That will be all for my turn.” Shougo turned his head derisively.

“My turn,” Tenjouin said quietly. “Draw.”

“You’re weak, Tenjouin-sensei,” Shougo said. “You’re weak for letting your emotions get the better of you. This isn’t a duel at all! You’ve been trying to appeal to what you believe to be the child within me. But there is no such being! I have been Darkness from the beginning, as I have been saying!”

The professor reflected on his words. Her eyes reflected no light; she seemed to be in shock.

“Buck up, Tenjouin-sensei!” Isabel shouted.

“Don’t let him play with your head!” Katsuki added.

“No,” Tenjouin said.

The onlookers gasped at her response.

“Tenjouin-sama!” Toragami shouted, her eyes flaring with rare emotion. “Have you declared your defeat?!”

“He’s right,” Tenjouin sighed, holding her arm with her hand. “I am being weak right now. I should have listened to you, Toragami-san, but I was weak. I was afraid of bringing defeat to my student, but more importantly… I was worried about bringing defeat to myself.”

“What are you talking about?” Aino asked, confused.

As the ocean began to move, Tenjouin spoke her words, her eyes still downcast. “That card… my past… I wanted to acknowledge it as my past, but not as a part of me. That is why I have the card in my deck. But… I can’t do that anymore.”

She reached up, and grasped the temple of her glasses. Tenjouin’s vision was fine, but she wore decorative glasses in the interests of looking adult. An appearance. A front. Closing her eyes, she removed them, folded them and placed them into her pocket.

“Toragami-san,” she said, keeping her eyes closed. “Please do me a favor.”

“Yes?”

“If I forget…” Tenjouin said softly, her head bowed. “Remind me.”

Toragami looked somewhat surprised, but then she nodded her assent. “I understand,” she said simply. “And I will.”

Tenjouin’s brow furrowed, remembering Toragami’s words. *Forget about my heart that was scorched by the light… and push forward. It’s the only way now. Unlock my hidden past… and create my own future. Win or draw… there is no lose in my destiny.*

“Shougo-kun…” she said slowly. “The true duel begins now.”

When Tenjouin opened her golden eyes, they looked different. They still did not reflect light, but showed a steely, frozen determination.

“I set three cards,” Tenjouin said. “Then I activate from my hand, ‘Treasure from Heaven’, forcing us to draw until we have six cards in our hand.”

“Still giving me gifts, Tenjouin-sensei?” Shougo said as he drew his cards. “Are you really serious

now?”

Tenjouin ignored her student. “I summon Snow Sprite in attack mode,” she announced.

A creature made of ice and spouting snowflakes in her wake spun on the field. She pointed a finger upward as she arrived.

***Snow Sprite*** *— LV4 Light Angel (1100 ATK)*

“What’s that thing going to do?” Shougo scoffed.

“While this card is on the field, you are not allowed to play magic cards on your turn,” Tenjouin explained. “You will have to set them for a turn first.”

“But Dark Angel Zerato will destroy it next turn!” Katsuki shouted. “That was a pointless move! At least play it in defense!”

“Don’t lose faith,” Toragami said.

“W… what?” Katsuki stammered in surprise.

“Tenjouin-sama’s eyes have changed. She’s not the person she was a moment ago,” Toragami replied, observing her teacher through narrowed eyes. “She’s playing the game to win now.”

“I set one card, and then activate from my hand, the field magic ‘Absolute Ice Wall’,” Tenjouin said. The water around them started to solidify and form shards of ice which emerged all around the duelists and the onlookers. A cold wind started to blow.

“C-cold!” Isabel shivered.

“Are these Tenjouin-sensei’s real cards?” Chiba wondered aloud.

“What are you planning?” Shougo shouted.

“You’ll see,” Tenjouin said. “I end my turn.”

“Then I’ll start mine! Draw! And…”

“Hold it.”

Shougo blinked. “Huh?”

“Reverse card open, ‘Call of the Living Dead’,” Tenjouin declared. “Forgive me, but I need to call on you once more, Cyber Angel Dakini.”

As the trap card revealed itself, a shadow of Dakini appeared on the field, looking none the worse for wear. As the image solidified, she turned to Tenjouin and nodded as if assenting to her use.

***Cyber Angel Dakini*** *(2700 ATK)*

“Dakini’s effect will activate once more,” Tenjouin said. “And once more, you only have one monster. Dakini, destroy Zerato!”

Zerato roared as its body was pierced by Dakini’s swords, and it toppled over to the ground, grunting in pain.

“Dark Angel… Zerato…” Shougo muttered. “How dare you do that to him?”

“Shougo-kun, or Darkness… whoever you are,” Tenjouin said as she narrowed her steely eyes. “I’m no longer holding back. This is a real duel now. And I won’t waste time with despair or regret. I am Tenjouin Asuka, head professor of Duel Academia, and I’ll protect my students by defeating you… no matter what happens.”

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD:** ***The Effect Monster, “Wicked Emperor Gaius”***
Level 6 Dark Demon, attack power 2400, defense power 1000. Arguably the most powerful and feared of the Emperor cards, its effect allows it to exclude any card on the field from the game, and if the chosen card is a Dark monster, 1000 points of damage are done to your opponent.

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***Tenjouin:*** *"If I open the path of light, I may lose myself. But to make another choice now…"*
***Aino:*** *"Tenjouin-sensei reveals the true power she'd been hiding… a brutal and fearsome force."*
***Toragami:*** *"To walk this path, one has to seal their heart. Tenjouin-sama is doing what is best for everyone."*
***Chiba:*** *"Whoever is using Shougo-kun is not going to go down just like that, though…"*
***Katsuki:*** *"Wait a minute… Tenjouin-sensei has that dragon?"*
***Aino:*** *"The Blue Ice White Nights Dragon reveals itself, and it seems the duel shall be decided. Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero:*** **No Regrets! White Veil, Activate***"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"If I continue to avoid my past, I will have no future. My students will have no future. I cannot… I will not regret this choice…!"*

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**SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION**

CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:

**GEMINI ELVES (Gemini Elf)**
*Normal Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1900/900)*

Elf twins that alternate their attacks.

**BLADE SKATER**
*Normal Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1400/1500)*
An image of beauty on the ice, this gorgeous warrior rips her opponents to pieces with her stylish Accel Slicer attack.

**PURE PUPIL**
*Counter Trap*
Activate only when you control a monster with an Attack power of 1000 or less, and your opponent activates the effect of an Effect Monster. Negate the effect, and destroy that monster.

**SUPER HOT-BLOODED BASEBALL KID (Ultimate Baseball Kid)**
*Effect Monster (L3 Fire Warrior, 500/1000)*
This card gains 1000 ATK for each other Fire-attribute Monster on the field. You can send 1 Fire-attribute Monster you control other than this card to the cemetery to inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent.

**SPELLBOOKS INSIDE THE POT**
Normal Magic
Both players draw 3 cards.

**WHITE VEIL**

*Equip Magic*

When the monster equipped with this card attacks, all Magic and Trap Cards on your opponent's side of the field are destroyed and their effects are negated. When the equipped monster is destroyed, take damage to your Life Points equal to the ATK of the equipped monster.

**CYBER PETIT ANGEL**

*Effect Monster (L2 Light Angel, 300/200)*

When this card is Summoned you can select 1 "Machine Goddess Ritual" from your Deck and add it to your hand.

**MACHINE ANGEL RITUAL**

*Ritual Magic*

This card is used to Ritual Summon a "Cyber Angel" Monster. You must offer monsters whose total Level equal or exceed the Level of the Ritual Monster.

**CYBER PRIMA**

*Effect Monster (L6 Light Warrior, 2300/1600)*

When this card is Tribute Summoned, destroy all face-up Magic cards on the field.

**CYBER ANGEL DAKINI**

*Effect Monster (L8 Light Angel, 2700/2400)*

This card can only be Ritual Summoned with the Ritual Magic Card “Machine Goddess Ritual”. When this card is Special Summoned, the opponent selects 1 Monster on their side of the field and destroys it. This monster inflicts piercing damage.

**TREASURE FROM HEAVEN (Card of Sanctity)**
*Normal Magic*
Both players draw cards until they have 6 cards in their hand.

**SNOW SPRITE (Snow Fairy)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Light Angel, 1100/700)*
While this card is face-up on the field, your opponent cannot activate Magic Cards from their hand, and cannot activate Magic Cards on the turn they are Set.

**ABSOLUTE ICE WALL (Absolute Zero Barrier)**
*Field Magic*
Monsters with Ice Counters lose 500 Attack points for each Ice Counter on them and cannot declare an attack.

**CALL OF THE LIVING DEAD (Call of the Hanted)**
*Continuous Trap*

Select 1 Monster in your cemetery and Special Summon it in Attack Position. If the selected Monster is destroyed, destroy this card. If this card is removed from the field, destroy the monster.

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CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**NEWDORIA**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, destroy 1 monster on the field.

**FOOLISH BURIAL**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Monster card from your deck and send it to your cemetery.

**D-HERO DIABOLICGUY (Destiny Hero — Malicious)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Warrior, 800/800)*
By removing this card in your cemetery from play, select 1 “D-HERO Diabolicguy” from your Deck and Special Summon it.

**KURIBOH**
*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Demon, 300/200)*
When your opponent attacks you during their Battle

Phase, you may discard this card from your hand to make the Battle Damage from that attack 0.

**SOUL ABSORPTION**
*Continuous Magic*
Each time a card is removed from play, raise your Life Points by 500 for each card removed from play.

**WICKED EMPEROR GAIUS (Caius the Shadow Monarch)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Demon, 2400/1000)*
When this card is summoned with a sacrifice, remove from play 1 card on the field. If the card is a Dark-attribute Monster, inflict 1000 points of damage to your opponent.

**BLAZES OF DEMISE (Fires of Doomsday)**
*Instant Magic*
You may not Summon monsters on the turn you activate this card. Special Summon 2 “Demise Tokens” (LV1 Dark Demon, 0/0) in Defense position. These tokens cannot be Tributed for the Tribute Summon of a non-Dark-Attribute Monster.

**DARK ANGEL ZERATO (Darklord Zerato)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Angel, 2800/2300)*
If there are 4 or more Dark-attribute monsters with different names in your Graveyard, you can Normal Summon this monster by sacrificing 1 Dark-attribute

monster. You can send 1 Dark-attribute monster from your hand to the cemetery to destroy all monsters your opponent controls. If you activate this effect, destroy this card during the End Phase of this turn.

**DRAIN SHIELD (Draining Shield)**

*Normal Trap*

Negate the attack of 1 of your opponent's monsters and gain Life Points equal to its ATK.

# 20. No Regrets! White Veil, Activate

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

*Special thanks to Hailynn for her permission for use of the card "Ice Encounter", which is her creation.*

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"Dakini's effect will activate once more," Tenjouin said. "And once more, you only have one monster. Dakini, destroy Zerato!"

Zerato roared as its body was pierced by Dakini's swords, and it toppled over to the ground, grunting in pain.

"Dark Angel… Zerato…" Shougo muttered. "How dare you do that to him?"

"Shougo-kun, or Darkness… whoever you are," Tenjouin said as she narrowed her steely eyes. "I'm no longer holding back. This is a real duel now. And I won't waste time with despair or regret. I am Tenjouin Asuka, head professor of Duel Academia, and I'll protect my students by defeating you… no matter what happens."

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**YU-GI-OH! -0**
***Turn Twenty: "No Regrets! White Veil, Activate!"***

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***Tenjouin** — 1300*
***Shougo** — 4100*

There was a dead silence in the air.

"What's with the repressive environment?" Chiba asked. "I… I feel like I can barely move."

“This is Darkness’ effect on a human being,” Toragami explained. “You will feel down, remorseful, regretful. Many negative emotions prey on your soul.”

“Whatever it is,” Aino thought aloud. “It doesn’t seem to be affecting Tenjouin-sensei at all.”

Toragami nodded. “She’s finally understood what’s at stake.”

“I’m never going to forgive you for destroying my Dark Angel Zerato,” Shougo said. “He… when I used him to defeat Horiuchi-kun…”

Toragami gasped suddenly.

“Toragami-sama?” Katsuki asked.

But Toragami stayed silent.

Katsuki glanced at Aino, who shrugged. They were both surprised to see Toragami react in this way. Toragami had never shown such an expression of shock towards anything.

“Horiuchi-kun, and all those people… they just hated me and I didn’t know why.” Shougo hugged himself as he reflected on the past. “But… now I know. They hated me because I’m Darkness. I’m a bad person!”

“That’s not true, Shougo-kun!” Chiba shouted. “How could they possibly know that? *You* didn’t even know that!”

“Chiba-kun?” Shougo glanced at Chiba with sad eyes.

“Sho… Shougo-kun?”

“…Did *you* know?”

Chiba looked down and held his hand against his head.

“Shougo-kun!” Tenjouin shouted. “What happened to all your zeal before? It’s your turn. Make your move!”

“Oh… of course.” Shougo’s innate scowl returned. “It’s time, then, Tenjouin-sensei, to introduce you to my true form. The soul that resides within this body.”

“What are you talking about?” Tenjouin asked.

“Rather than talk about it, why don’t I show you?” Shougo grinned madly and took a card from his hand and threw it on his duel disk, hard. “I summon Dark King Prometheus in attack mode!”

With surprisingly little preceding fanfare, a hooded robe simply appeared from the ground, and a shadowy, human-looking figure formed inside it. The only thing visible in its hood were a pair of menacing yellow eyes.

***Dark King Prometheus*** *— LV4 Dark Demon (1200 ATK)*

Chiba took a step back. “That’s… Shougo’s true form?” He felt his insides respond with panic, making strange sounds, and he clutched his chest. *What’s this horrible feeling of terror inside me? I feel… sick…*

“Are you okay, Chiba?” Isabel asked, then started to feel the same way. She dropped to her knees and sighed, trying to keep the pain from making her scream.

Aino and Katsuki suffered similar symptoms. Toragami just stood as usual, although her eyes began to shimmer as if with tears.

Tenjouin, however, was unaffected.

Shougo continued with the game. “Dark King Prometheus’s effect, activate! By removing any number of Dark monsters in my cemetery from play, he’ll gain 400 attack points for each one!”

The images of several monsters appeared behind Shougo. They seemed to be roaring in pain as, from the bottom up, they were transformed into black energy.

“I remove Wicked Emperor Gaius, Dark Armed Dragon, Dark Angel Zerato, Newdoria and D-HERO Diabolicguy from the game,” Shougo declared. “And thus, Prometheus gains 2000 attack points!”

The cloaked figure could be heard to chuckle as the dark power was drawn into his hands.

***Dark King Prometheus*** *(1200 ATK + 2000 = 3200 ATK)*

“And don’t forget the effect of my magic card Soul Absorption,” Shougo reminded his opponent. “I gain 500 life points each time a monster is removed from play!” White light shimmered around him once again.

***Shougo*** *— 4100 LP + 2500 = 6600 LP*

“Sixty six… hundred…” Katsuki grunted through agonized tears.

“H… how can Ten… Tenjouin-sensei win now?…” Isabel muttered.

Tenjouin continued to be calm.

As the cold wind air blew and the water crashed up against the boardwalk, she meditated on her past. When she had fought Titan to restore her brother's memories. When she'd lost to Manjoume and became a member of the Society of Light. When Judai restored her heart by melting the ice within it with his fiery passion…

*"Sleepyhead!"* he had said.

*"The you controlled by Saiou is kind of boring… uncool, you know,"* he had said on another occasion.

*Perhaps boring and uncool are what I need to be now,* Tenjouin thought. *I am an adult. I can no longer be concerned with things like having a good time. Now, I must protect my students, with my life if need be.*

"You look surprisingly calm," Shougo said. "Perhaps you're thinking all you'll lose is your Snow Sprite or Dakini. But, no… the game ends on this turn! Because the facedown I have had from the beginning is… 'Return from the Different Dimension', which I'll activate now!"

"No!" Aino gasped.

"Not that card!" Chiba shouted through his pain.

“I pay half of my life points first,” Shougo said, and then started to grumble as a pink aura surrounded him. As the trap drained his life points away, one could see veins begin to pop up along his body, as his teeth began to grind. At first, it was just a little wincing, but then Shougo threw his head back, shouting something that was both a cry of pain and laughter at once.

When the aura subsided, his life points at 3300, he dropped his head for a second, his breathing labored, until he lifted his head.

***Shougo*** *— 6600 LP / 2 = 3300 LP*

Once he’d recovered his wits, he stood erect and chuckled. “Now with that out of the way, I can summon all the monsters that I’ve removed from play!”

The trap card was forced back facedown and encased in a block of ice.

“What just happened?!” Shougo shouted.

“I won’t let you do that,” Tenjouin said. “Reverse card open… ‘Instant Freezing’. This card negates the activation of a magic or trap card and flips it back facedown. You won’t be able to activate it for three more turns.”

“B… but my life points…”

“Payment on a card,” Tenjouin said. “You don’t get that back if the card is negated.”

“No!” Shougo shouted. “N… G… Damn you, Tenjouin Asuka! Damn you to hell! I’m going to hurt you for that! I’m going to pull your soul out of your body with my own hands!”

“I see,” Tenjouin said, the slightest hint of sadness in her voice. “If you believe you’re an evil person, then that’s what you are. Evil people have no right to exist in this world. Shougo… today, I will end your life.”

“What?”

“Your existence will disappear through this Dark Duel.” Tenjouin repeated.

“It’s too early to be talking big!” Shougo shouted. “Prometheus is still here, and I’ll have him attack your Snow Sprite now! Go, Prometheus! Dark Chained Secrets!”

Prometheus began to charge, black cloak trailing behind it as it neared Snow Sprite. A single blackened hand with knife-like nails at the end of

each finger neared, when its movement suddenly froze.

Tenjouin shook her head. “Reverse card open, ‘Ice Encounter’,” she said. “I place an Ice Counter on your Prometheus. And because of Absolute Ice Wall, he cannot attack.”

Ice began to creep along Dark King Prometheus, starting at its feet, and spreading up across its body. The layer of ice encased it, until it came to a stop at the tip of its fingers, barely an inch away from Snow Sprite’s throat.

***Dark King Prometheus*** *(3200 ATK — 500 = 2700 ATK)*

“So he lost some attack power due to Absolute Ice Wall as well,” Shougo said with a cynical grin. “Very well… I set one card and end my turn.”

Prometheus’ aura began to dissipate and its attack power dropped.

***Dark King Prometheus*** *(2700 ATK — 2000 = 700 ATK)*

“Prometheus! What happened?” Shougo looked to be barely in control of himself.

The pain that afflicted Chiba and the others began to lessen. “What *did* happen?” Isabel asked Chiba.

“The power-up effect only lasts until the end of the turn,” Chiba said after catching his breath. “Then it returns to normal.”

“I guess… Shougo-kun intended to finish it on this turn,” Aino mused. “Thank God that Tenjouin-sensei was prepared.”

“You should not thank God for such trivial matters,” Toragami said. “It’s because of Tenjouin-sama’s strength of heart and will that Shougo’s plan was thwarted.”

“Toragami-sama!” Katsuki said with surprise. “I didn’t think you believed in things like that.” She tried very hard to hide a smile.

“My turn,” Tenjouin said. ‘Draw!’ She moved quickly and without thought. “I activate from my hand the continuous magic card ‘White Night Fort’.”

The temperature in the duel arena decreased further.

“What does *that* do?” Shougo demanded. “Tell me!”

“It’s very simple,” Tenjouin responded. “Neither player can play trap cards on the opponent’s turn.”

“No!” Shougo took a step back. *The ‘Mirror Force’ card I set is useless now!*

“Next,” Tenjouin said, withdrawing a card from her hand. “I activate the magic card ‘Swing of Fond Memories’.”

The image of a young girl walking to a swing attached to a tree with a sunset in the background appeared.

“This card represents the agony I felt in my first years of Duel Academia, when my brother was in the grip of Darkness,” Tenjouin said. “Would I give up those memories? The agony? As much as it pains me to say it, I had good times, too. And… I miss the pain, sometimes.”

“Get to the point,” Shougo spat.

“I can summon a Normal Monster from my cemetery,” Tenjouin said. “And I choose the Gemini Elves.”

The twin, tall female elves once again appeared, hand in hand.

Tenjouin stood straight and turned her head to her monsters. “Cyber Angel Dakini…”

Dakini nodded.

“Gemini Elves…”

The elves also nodded.

“I need your spirits to help me call on this monster. The one that will unlock the door to my past, and lead me to my future. I sacrifice Cyber Angel Dakini and Gemini Elves now to summon the unrivaled master of water and ice…”

The water in the sea began to rise, take the shape of a dragon and become ice. The wind whipped fiercely through the area where the duelists played and the observers watched.

“Could it be…” Chiba shouted.

“No way!” Isabel gasped.

The wind whipped Tenjouin’s hair into a frenzy as she held the card in her hand. “Show yourself, Blue Ice White Nights Dragon!”

The congealing water took the shape of an ice dragon — the same one Mark had called on in his

duel against Toragami. It let out a nerve-chilling roar as it spread its arms and wings aggressively.

***Blue Ice White Nights Dragon*** *— LV8 Water Dragon (3000 ATK)*

“And that’s not all.” Tenjouin said. Her hand visibly trembled as it reached for the duel disk button that would activate her remaining facedown. “I finally activate… the equip magic… ‘White Veil’.”

The image of a woman surrounding herself in a white satin sheet appeared on the field and a thin sheen of light began to surround the White Nights Dragon.

“Secure the future of my students…”

The dragon reared back as a light glowed within its mouth.

“Secure the future of Duel Academia…”

Shougo shielded himself in preparation for the incoming blow.

“Secure my future! White Nights Dragon! Destroy Dark King Prometheus!”

The White Nights Dragon thrust itself forward and shot its blast at the frozen monster.

Tenjouin's eyes narrowed and her fist thrust out. "*Freezing Burst Stream*!"

In a moment, Dark King Prometheus was struck by the blast. Its outer covering of ice broke apart and its body broke apart. It gave a blood curdling final roar of pain which made everyone shudder.

Shougo, though, appeared unconcerned. "I send Kuriboh from my hand to the cemetery to negate the damage," he said.

"Unfortunately, it's not quite as simple as that," Tenjouin said. "When a monster equipped with White Veil attacks, the opponent's magic and trap cards are all destroyed."

"W… what?!" Shougo looked on either side of him as his frozen Return from the Different Dimension and his set Mirror Force card were destroyed.

"Not to mention the fact that Snow Sprite hasn't attacked yet," Tenjouin said. Snow Sprite raised its finger as energy began to gather around her fingertip, and then in an instant shot a ray of cold energy at Shougo's chest.

***Shougo*** *— 3300 LP — 1100 = 2200 LP*

Shougo's body shuddered violently as he fell to one knee.

"Turn end," Tenjouin said.

"My turn," Shougo muttered painfully. "Draw!"

He eyed the card he drew. *'Heavy Storm'… thanks to that damn Snow Sprite, I can't use it.*

"I see you are holding no illusions that you will win this fight," Tenjouin said with a deadly smile.

"What did you say?" Shougo asked angrily.

"It's all over your face… Darkness," Tenjouin explained. "Despair. I see it. I see it as clearly as day."

"I'll teach you to underestimate me," Shougo retorted. "I set one monster card facedown and end my turn."

"My turn. Draw. I summon Cold Enchanter in attack mode."

An aqua-blue lady dressed in ice armor and holding a staff with a snowflake on one end appeared.

***Cold Enchanter** — LV4 Water Aqua (1600 ATK)*

"Snow Sprite… attack Shougo's facedown."

"How cocky!" Shougo said with a laugh. "Attacking my facedown with such a weak monster!"

Tenjouin ignored him as the Snow Sprite did its finger attack once more. The flipped up card revealed a sickly looking gas cloud which erupted and surrounded the field in toxic fumes.

***Giant Virus** — LV2 Dark Demon (100 DEF)*

"Too bad, Tenjouin-sensei," Shougo said, madly gritting his teeth. "When Giant Virus is destroyed, not only do you take 500 points of damage, but I get two more Virii on my field!"

The two balls of biotoxins appeared on the field.

***Giant Virus** (1000 ATK)*
***Giant Virus** (1000 ATK)*

The gas cloud surrounded Tenjouin and dropped her Life Points. Tenjouin had no visible reaction.

***Tenjouin** — 1300 LP — 500 = 800 LP*

“Cold Enchanter!” Tenjouin ordered. “Destroy Giant Virus!”

The Enchanter shot a snowflake out of its staff, which ruptured the virus and caused a wave of cold to slap against Shougo’s body.

***Shougo*** *— 2200 LP — 600 = 1400 LP*

Shougo continued to laugh. “500 more points of damage to you!” he said.

***Tenjouin*** *— 800 LP — 500 = 300 LP*

“I wouldn’t laugh if I were you…” Tenjouin said in a monotone voice. “Because you’re about to die. Blue Ice White Nights Dragon! Destroy Giant Virus! *Freezing Burst Stream*!”

Shougo just laughed harder, chest heaving and arms thrown, as the dragon’s icey attack pierced the other virus. The blast surrounded him and erupted around him in a blast of ice and wind.

***Shougo*** *— 1400 LP — 2000 = 0*

---

Ayukawa was frantic with helping the unconscious children all on her own when one of

them started to stir awake.

“Sensei… wh… what happened?” he said. “I was dueling, then next thing I know I’m on my back.”

“Oi, sensei,” another said. “What does a guy have to do to get some food around here?”

Ayukawa paused and clutched her notepad tight.

*Tenjouin-sensei.*… she thought to herself. *I pray you are the one who reached him first.*

---

Shougo’s body was on the ground, battered and unconscious. His eyes were open, blank and unseeing. Blood seeped from his mouth.

The purple flame aura around the players had disappeared, and Tenjouin’s Solid Vision had turned off. It was a normal night. Wind blew through everyone’s hair and the sea crashed against the boardwalk, which appeared to have suffered no damage.

“It… it… Sh…” Chiba stammered, unable to believe what he was seeing.

“Shougo’s… d…” Isabel sniffed.

“Shougo’s dead,” Tenjouin whispered in a heartbroken voice. Her eyes had reverted to normal, and tears streamed from them.

Katsuki stepped backward, appearing shaken by the events, and sat down on her knees. Then, to everyone’s surprise, she was the first one to burst into weeping.

Toragami did as everyone expected, though. Her face remained stoic with no sign of grief. She walked towards Shougo’s body, calmly and deliberately.

When she passed Tenjouin, she paused and turned back.

“Did you forget, Tenjouin-sama?” she asked.

Tenjouin’s eyes widened in remembrance.

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*“Toragami-san,” she said, keeping her eyes closed. “Please do me a favor.”*

*“Yes?”*

*“If I forget…” Tenjouin said softly, her head bowed. “Remind me.”*

*Toragami looked somewhat surprised, but then she nodded her assent. “I understand,” she said simply. “And I will.”*

---

“Y… you…” Tenjouin cried out. “You did this on purpose! You didn’t remind me, so I could kill Shougo-kun in your place! T-Toragami-san…”

“Do I seem like the kind of coward who would allow another to defeat my rival?”

Tenjouin’s rage stopped in its tracks.

Toragami kept walking towards Shougo and knelt down at his body.

“Get it together, Aoyama Shougo,” she said, reaching her hand out.

Shougo’s body began to shake and tremble. Everyone gasped, not the least of which was Tenjouin.

His arm rised a bit, slowly at first, and then full on, and clasped Toragami’s hand.

“T… Toragami-san…” he whispered. “Am… am I still Darkness?”

“No,” Toragami said. “Darkness is dead.”

Shougo gasped and his face became a smile. He burst into tears and grabbed Toragami in an embrace. “Toragami-san!” he cried.

To everyone’s surprise, Toragami returned the embrace.

“This is too much craziness for one night,” opined Katsuki, drying her eyes.

“But… how?” Chiba asked.

Toragami let go of Shougo, who remained kneeling on the ground, too weak to stand. She got up and looked at the sea.

“It… it makes sense,” Tenjouin said. “That’s why you didn’t stop me, Toragami-san. I’m sorry I insulted you.”

“Aoyama-san was ready to sacrifice his life… no, his existence to save the world from himself,” Toragami said. “Becoming an individual… that was the end of Darkness. He’s… he’s stronger than me.”

Everyone was silent as the sun began to rise. The wind began to blow, and for a moment, there was calm and peace in Duel Academia.

“We should get Aoyama-san back to the medical office,” Tenjouin said, replacing her glasses as she stepped forward.

Toragami nodded and hummed, and reached for Shougo. “I’ll help you up,” she said.

“Thank you, Toragami-san,” Shougo said, quietly accepting the help.

---

The damage to Shougo’s body was, unfortunately, quite severe; while he bore no scarring or internal damage, his vital signs were quite below normal for the many months it took him to recover. The doctors that Ayukawa sent in all said it was a miracle he was still alive.

Nevertheless, his recovery was stable, if slow. Chiba, Isabel, Mark and Tenjouin visited him daily. Aino and Katsuki would even drop by on occasion.

Toragami, however, did not show up until a week before Shougo received a clean bill of health.

“Hello,” she said when she arrived.

Shougo looked up from his bed. “I didn’t think you’d come,” he admitted.

“I don’t want you to get the wrong idea, Aoyama-san,” Toragami said with her arms behind her back. “I didn’t save you because we’re friends.”

“Just don’t tell me that we’re eternal rivals or something,” Shougo sighed. “I don’t think I can handle that destiny.”

“There’s no such thing as ‘eternal rival’,” Toragami said. “One of us will surpass the other, and move on to bigger, better and brighter opponents. Someday that will happen, without a doubt.”

“God, Toragami-san…” Shougo replied, moaning as he drew himself up from his bed. “Are you ever not serious? We could at least act like friends sometimes. I mean, if it weren’t for you, I’d be dead.”

“Aoyama-san, the truth is, I need you,” Toragami said, taking a seat. “Light can’t exist without the darkness.”

“But I thought you said…”

“Don’t mistake my words,” Toragami said. “Darkness is dead… but when the sun goes down, the moon takes its place.”

She got up from the chair and touched Shougo's deck that was laying on his nightstand.

"Your determination is still weak," she said. "I want you to be a strong rival for me. So that when we duel, we both can reveal all that is hidden within us."

Shougo's face became stern. "I understand," he said.

Toragami left on that note.

Shougo glanced at his deck and picked it up, looking through his cards. *It's true… my determination is still weak,* he thought to himself. *I'll do what I can to improve my recovery, and then… Toragami Hinata, I'll beat you for sure.*

He lay back with his arms behind his head and looked out the window. A crow and a dove flew together in the distance.

*And once I do…* he thought before he fell asleep. *Perhaps you'll start to enjoy your life again.*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *The Equip Magic, "White Veil"***

When the monster that is equipped with this card attacks, all your opponent's magic and trap cards' effects are negated and they are destroyed. However, if the equipped monster is destroyed, the owner pays a terrible price…

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***Shougo:*** *"Seasons change, time passes, new faces appear and new duels occur…"*
***Chiba:*** *"That's surprisingly deep, Shougo-kun! You certainly have changed!"*
***Aino:*** *"The announcement of the Midterm Exams is made — with the revival of the Genex Tournament."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"The entire island will become a battlefield."*
***Aino:*** *"But someone is intent on keeping Aoyama-kun from that battlefield and will go to any lengths to do it…"*
***Shougo:*** *"I won't run away from any battle again! Otherwise, I'll betray the rival that went as far as she did to save me."*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero:*** **'Return of Genex! The Deadly Shadow Reveals Itself'.*"***
***Chiba:*** *"More bad guys? I don't like where this is going…"*

## SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION

CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:

**CYBER ANGEL DAKINI**
*Effect Monster (L8 Light Angel, 2700/2400)*
This card can only be Ritual Summoned with the Ritual Magic Card "Machine Goddess Ritual". When this card is Special Summoned, the opponent selects 1 Monster on their side of the field and destroys it. This monster inflicts piercing damage.

**SNOW SPRITE (Snow Fairy)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Light Angel, 1100/700)*
While this card is face-up on the field, your opponent cannot activate Magic Cards from their hand, and cannot activate Magic Cards on the turn they are Set.

**INSTANT FREEZING (Instant Freeze)**
*Instant Magic*
Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card and flip it facedown. That card cannot be activated until the third of your End Phases after the activation of this card.

**ICE ENCOUNTER**
*Instant Magic*

Place 1 Ice Counter on one of your opponent's face-up Monsters.

**ABSOLUTE ICE WALL (Absolute Zero Barrier)**
*Field Magic*
Monsters with Ice Counters lose 500 Attack points for each Ice Counter on them and cannot declare an attack.

**WHITE NIGHT FORT**
*Continuous Magic*
Neither player may activate Trap Cards during their opponent's turn.

**SWING OF FOND MEMORIES (Swing of Memories)**
*Normal Magic*
Special Summon 1 Normal Monster from your cemetery. It is destroyed during the End Phase of this turn.

**GEMINI ELVES (Gemini Elf)**
*Normal Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1900/900)*
Elf twins that alternate their attacks.

**BLUE ICE WHITE NIGHTS DRAGON (White Night Dragon)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Water Dragon, 3000/2500)*

Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card that targets this card and destroy it. When a face-up Monster you control is selected as an attack target, by sending one face-up Magic or Trap card you control to the cemetery, change the attack target to this card.

**WHITE VEIL**
*Equip Magic*
If the monster equipped with this card attacks, all Magic and Trap Cards on your opponent's side of the field are destroyed and their effects are negated. When the equipped monster is destroyed, you receive damage to your Life Points equal to the equipped monster's ATK.

**COLD ENCHANTER**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Aqua, 1600/1200)*
You can discard 1 card to place an Ice Counter on 1 face-up monster. This card gains 300 ATK for each Ice Counter on the field.

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CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:

**DARK KING PROMETHEUS (Prometheus, King of the Shadows)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*

When you Normal Summon this card, remove from play any number of Dark-attribute monsters in your Graveyard. This card gains 400 ATK for each removed card, until the end of this turn.

**WICKED EMPEROR GAIUS (Caius the Shadow Monarch)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Demon, 2400/1000)*
When this card is summoned with a sacrifice, remove from play 1 card on the field. If the card is a Dark-attribute Monster, inflict 1000 points of damage to your opponent.

**DARK ARMED DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2800/1000)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned when you have exactly 3 Dark-attribute Monsters in your cemetery. By removing 1 Dark-attribute Monster in your cemetery from play, destroy 1 card on the field.

**DARK ANGEL ZERATO (Darklord Zerato)**
*Effect Monster (L8 Dark Angel, 2800/2300)*
If there are 4 or more Dark-attribute monsters with different names in your Graveyard, you can Normal Summon this monster by sacrificing 1 Dark-attribute monster. You can send 1 Dark-attribute monster from your hand to the cemetery to destroy all

monsters your opponent controls. If you activate this effect, destroy this card during the End Phase of this turn.

**NEWDORIA**
*Effect Monster (L4 Dark Demon, 1200/800)*
When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, destroy 1 monster on the field.

**D-HERO DIABOLICGUY (Destiny Hero — Malicious)**
*Effect Monster (L6 Dark Warrior, 800/800)*
By removing this card in your cemetery from play, select 1 “D-HERO Diabolicguy” from your Deck and Special Summon it.

**SOUL ABSORPTION**
*Continuous Magic*
Each time a card is removed from play, raise your Life Points by 500 for each card removed from play.

**RETURN FROM THE DIFFERENT DIMENSION**
*Normal Trap*
Pay half of your Life Points. Special Summon as many Monsters as possible from your cemetery. These monsters are removed from play during the End Phase of the turn this card is activated.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE**

*Normal Trap*

Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Destroy all Attack Position monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**KURIBOH**

*Effect Monster (L1 Dark Demon, 300/200)*

When your opponent attacks you during their Battle Phase, you may discard this card from your hand to make the Battle Damage from that attack 0.

**GIANT VIRUS (Giant Germ)**

*Effect Monster (L2 Dark Demon, 1000/100)*

When this card is destroyed and sent to the cemetery as a result of battle, inflict 500 points of damage to your opponent. You may also Special Summon up to 2 "Giant Virus" Cards from your Deck in Attack Position.

# 21. The Deadly Shadow Reveals Itself!

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*The non-original characters in this fanfiction are copyrighted to Kazuki Takahashi, Studio Gallup and Toei where applicable. All other characters are considered public domain by the author and may be used freely, but he does request that you ask permission as a courtesy.*

*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (vm_). Thank you very much for reading.*

*Author's Note: I will now be using "Duel Academy" instead of 'Duel Academia', since promotional materials and animation cels confirm that the name of the school is in fact "Duel Academy".*

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**YU-GI-OH! -0**

***Turn Twenty-One: "Return of Genex! The Deadly***

***Shadow Reveals Itself”***

---

Time meanders by for all, and so it did with the students at Duel Academy.

Before long, by all accounts, it was midterm examination time, which meant time spent dueling and having fun with friends was now spent practically sequestered at the library or dorm room cramming for tests.

But an interesting twist to the common examination would be happening this year…

All students in the school were summoned to the Examination Hall. When they arrived, they were met by head professor Asuka Tenjouin.

“Welcome, students of Duel Academy,” she said. “As you know, we are an institution of higher learning. We teach you knowledge that will be applicable to your lives after you leave here, whether you continue your lives as duelists or if life takes you down another road.

“But an education in dueling is about more than mere knowledge,” Tenjouin said to the crowd of students. “Your parents and guardians have entrusted

us to give you that knowledge. But they expect more from us, and from you. They expect us to build hearts that are ready to confront any challenge, without fear, with only the excitement that is a duel. And they expect you to be prepared to meet those challenges."

She then opened her briefcase, took out a slide and placed it on the podium, which caused a logo to be displayed on the screen behind her.

"And that is why it is with great pleasure that I announce the revival of the Genex Tournament on this island."

The students were now loud with commotion, and Tenjouin waited for it to die down noticeably so that they would listen to her further words.

"The entrants of this tournament will be competing for the title of Kaiser, a name we give to the strongest duelist in the school," she said. "Initially, the participants will duel each other with Star points on the line."

"Star points?" the students asked each other.

"When you enter the tournament successfully, you will be given a Duel Disk that automatically records how many Star points you have," Tenjouin

explained. “Each entrant will begin with one Star point, and will bet those points in duels. Once you get ten points, you will return to the Technological Center to register in the finals.”

“The top eight students in terms of academics will be given automatic Star points,” Tenjouin said. “The remaining 72 points will be given at the technological office, along with the Genex duel disks, once those students are announced. First come, first serve.”

A commotion went up with the students again.

“We’re going to break to give you some time to discuss things,” Tenjouin concluded. “We’ll reconvene here after lunch, and the top eight students will be announced. Students, you are dismissed.”

The students poured out of the arena, and Tenjouin watched them, feeling a certain amount of trepidation.

*Soon, this entire island will become a battlefield,* she thought to herself. *It’s going to be quite interesting, I suppose…*

---

Katsurou Chiba ate his lunch on a table by himself. He was deep in thought, wondering how his friend Shougo was doing.

“What are you thinking of, Herr Chiba?” a student with a thick German accent said.

Chiba glanced up from his reverie and noted the student. Another Osiris student with shaggy hair and eyes that hid from view. He’d seen him around. “Oh, hello, Almaz-san,” he said. “I’m thinking of my friend, Shougo-kun… he’s still in the medical office. I kind of wish he was here.”

“Oh, I see,” Almaz said, nodding his head. “I thought perhaps you were planning a strategy.”

Chiba laughed. “Well, I certainly plan on entering,” he said. “But I’m probably not going to win!”

“You shouldn’t be so hard on yourself,” Almaz said, his Japanese barely understandable due to his thick German accent. “My father says that belief is the first step to victory.”

“Well, that’s kind of true,” Chiba chuckled. “But anything can happen in a duel, you know. Sometimes you get bad hands and there’s nothing you can do.”

“My father believes you make your own luck,” Almaz replied, trying to figure out how to open the pack that contained his lunch.

“Luck is in the hands of God,” Chiba said, reaching to help Almaz with his package. “What you do with that luck determines your future.”

“That is well said, Herr Chiba.” Almaz nodded his thanks. “Did your father teach you that?”

Chiba closed his eyes and laughed. “No, I kind of came up with that on my own! Anyway, are you going to be entering, Almaz-san?”

Almaz looked down and nodded quietly.

“Well, let’s finish our lunches and get back to the auditorium quickly then…”

---

Tenjouin walked into the faculty office wringing her wrists. Kiyotaki and Osiris Red head Mayako Matsutani were there.

“Inspirational as always, Tenjouin-san,” Kiyotaki commented.

“I still feel terrible about this,” Tenjouin noted.

A dapper-looking man walked into the room. “You shouldn’t have to worry, Asuka-chan… since I’m sponsoring this event.”

Tenjouin turned to the man. Someone she knew from her past, who had come a month before the midterms with the idea.

“Mitsuo-san,” she greeted him. “Or do you still want me to call you ‘Boy’?”

“‘Tahuru-san’ is fine as that is my last name,” he said. “But I’ll have to show you the same respect, and call you ‘Tenjouin-san’. It’s a shame that that will be our relationship for now.”

Tenjouin smiled and closed her eyes, nodding her head a bit.

“Before you return to the arena, I have something important to show you, Tenjouin-san,” Kiyotaki said. “The list of the top eight students in Duel Academy.”

“Yes?” Tenjouin said, and Kiyotaki handed her the list. Out of habit, she adjusted her glasses as she read. She then gasped.

“Aoyama Shougo is our number two student?” she gasped. “But… he’s in the medical center!”

“It’s no mistake,” Matsutani said. “We’ve been carefully monitoring him. It seems he’s actually doing the classwork that his friends give him, and scoring high on the tests to boot.”

Tenjouin smiled a bit despite herself. “He’s an Osiris Red student!” she said. “This will shake up Duel Academy for sure.”

“Certainly,” Tahuru said. “But of course, there will be some people who would accuse him of cheating.”

“We have to be aware of this,” Kiyotaki said. “I’ve learned from my mistakes. I don’t want to put undue pressure on him.”

“I’ll talk to him,” Tenjouin offered. “See what he thinks of the situation.”

Kiyotaki nodded. “That would be wise, Tenjouin-san.”

“Kiyotaki-kouchou… Tahuru-san… Matsutani-sensei.” Tenjouin bowed politely and made her own leave.

Tahuru and Kiyotaki both watched her go. “She’s an excellent teacher, isn’t she?” Tahuru asked

Kiyotaki. “It was certainly a good choice to make her lead professor.”

“Yes,” Kiyotaki replied, but his face betrayed nervousness. Tahuru, for his own reasons, chose to overlook it, and returned to organizational matters.

“Sir?” Matsutani asked.

“…I’ll be okay, Matsutani-san,” Kiyotaki said. “You’d better head back to the dorms and prepare yourself. It might be a bit interesting in your area for awhile.”

“Yes, Sir,” Matsutani nodded and left quietly.

Kiyotaki turned and looked out the window.

*I really feel like I’m in a poor position,* he thought to himself. *I do not wish to harm the boy or put him in harm’s way. But this school was created to investigate the supernatural phenomena behind Duel Monsters. And to do that… I must…*

---

In the medical office, Shougo sat up on his bed, playing a portable video game, when Tenjouin entered the room.

“Tenjouin-sensei!” Shougo exclaimed.

“You’ve been quite busy,” Tenjouin said quietly as she moved across his room. “Even in this hospital room, you’re one of the top eight students in the school.”

“It’s very important to me to keep my grades up now,” Shougo said. “I’ve had my friends bring me my work and their notes. It gives me something to do.”

Tenjouin smiled. “So studious.”

“I heard that means I’m automatically entered in this tournament,” Shougo replied. “But you’re here to ask me not to enter, right?”

Tenjouin’s eyes widened slightly. Was she that transparent that he saw through her intentions?

“Don’t worry,” he said quietly. “I don’t plan on entering, anyway. Ayukawa-sensei says she doesn’t feel safe letting me out until my vital signs are normal again.”

He then looked down, a frown settling on his face. “It’s too bad, though.”

“What do you mean?” Tenjouin asked, adjusting her glasses.

“Studying isn’t all I’ve been doing,” Shougo said quietly, and took out his deck from his nightstand. He spread it out and showed it to his teacher.

Tenjouin immediately recognized two things — several new cards, as well as the lack of the Red-Eyes Black Dragon.

“You… took out the Red-Eyes?” Tenjouin asked. “Why?”

“I remember Chiba saying that the Red-Eyes represents my hope,” Shougo replied. “But it doesn’t feel that way to me. It is more like a chain that keeps me in my past. I have to move beyond that.”

“Aoyama-kun…” Tenjouin said simply.

“I want to enter the tournament,” Shougo admitted. “But being able to study is more important to me right now. If I go without getting a clean bill of health from Ayukawa-sensei, I might collapse.”

Tenjouin took a closer look at Shougo’s deck and gasped in utter shock. *These cards.*…

“Aoyama-kun, how did you get these cards?” she asked.

“I got them from Chiba-kun,” Shougo explained. “He brings me booster packs from the store every

week.”

*These cards, though… last time I heard, these were forbidden and kept by Samejima-kouchou in a very private place,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *To get them from a booster pack at the store is literally impossible…*

“Tenjouin-sensei?” Shougo asked, then noticed her expression, and his own face fell. ‘Oh. I understand. These cards are really rare, too, aren’t they?’ He sighed. “I don’t have any luck at all.”

*In my day, some students would kill to get these cards,* Tenjouin thought. *But you consider yourself unlucky. Aoyama-kun… I* knew *there was a gentle child inside of you.*

“Well, you don’t have to enter,” Tenjouin said. “But some students might put pressure on you to give up your Star point to them.”

“I… I’m not sure what I’ll do about that yet, Tenjouin-sensei,” Shougo said, and then leaned over and held his head. “I… I don’t feel so good.”

“You rest, Aoyama-kun,” Tenjouin urged him quietly. “There’s no need to rush this.”

Shougo leaned over and closed his eyes, and right away he was asleep. Tenjouin sighed as she got up, and hugged her arm as she walked away.

*I say that… but he'll have to decide by tomorrow whether he wants to be in this tournament or not. I don't know what I can do for him by then…*

---

The students reconvened in the Examination Hall, as requested. Asuka Tenjouin waited for the commotion to settle down before she resumed her announcement.

"And now, as promised," Tenjouin announced. "The top eight students who are automatically entered in the Genex tournament." She motioned to the wall where the names were now displayed.

As expected, Hinata Toragami was the number one student in the school. She didn't have to worry about getting any Star points. But one name caused the entire student body to gasp.

"Shougo Aoyama is in second place?"

"An Osiris Red student?"

"Isn't he in the medical office?"

Tenjouin heard the commotion and sighed quietly once more. She then stated the rules of the tournament.

“Registration will be at the Technological Office where you will receive your new duel disk. Your grades have to be at least on the average level to be permitted entry in the tournament, and the deadline is six in the morning tomorrow; the tournament will officially begin at 9 a/m. Those who are unable to register will have to instead write a 20-page report on a duel-related topic of their teacher’s choice.

“Those who compete in the tournament will be dueling for Star points. You can bet any amount of Star points that you have, but no more than what your opponent has. Exchange of Star points without dueling is not permitted, except for the top 8 students, who may choose not to enter the tournament at their own discretion, and instead write the report.

“You may use any cards you wish, other than cards which are explicitly forbidden by Industrial Illusions for use in official tournaments. Decks must be 40 cards, no more and no less, but you may switch cards or decks at your own discretion. Cheating will not be tolerated and anyone caught

doing so will be made to forefeit their duel immediately. We will have teachers observing the duels around the island, so do not cheat!

“Once your Star points reach ten, your Duel Disk will be rendered inactive. At that point, you must go to the Technological Office and register for the finals, which will take place the next day. Thank you to all the students, and good luck!”

She left the students at that, and the commotion restarted immediately. Tenjouin listened to the students’ words.

“Let’s go and enter right away!” one said.

“I wonder if Aoyama-san will be entering,” another said. “He’s sick, though…”

“Yes, he shouldn’t enter if he’s not well… but it’s up to him, isn’t it?” his friend told him. “It’s amazing, though… he *is* a hard worker.”

Tenjouin was surprised, when listening to the students, to hear not an audible thought that Shougo might be cheating, or a note of disbelief. She couldn’t help but smile.

*We’ve really done a good job teaching these students, haven’t we?…*

Just then, her PDA rang, and Tenjouin's heart skipped a beat. It was Ayukawa.

"Tenjouin-sensei, get to the medical office, and hurry!" she shouted. She sounded and looked as if she had been in a fight.

Tenjouin bit her lip. *I need to leave now, but I can't leave the students this way!* She glanced off the side to her assistant, who nodded understanding.

"I will leave the floor to Raiku-san, who will explain the mechanics of the new Duel Disks," Tenjouin said, trying to disguise the anxiety in her voice. "Thank you once again!"

She then got off the stage delicately, but her heart got the better of her and she broke into a run.

*What is this terrible feeling I'm having…?*

---

When Tenjouin got to the medical office, she found a mess, and Ayukawa sitting on a chair, being tended to by nurses. Her eyes were bloodshot and swollen. She'd been crying.

"What happened?" Tenjouin asked.

“I’m sorry, Tenjouin-san,” Ayukawa said. “A man came in claiming to be Aoyama-kun’s father. When I wouldn’t let him in, he knocked me unconscious. Nobody else was watching him and… he’s gone.”

“Gone?!” Tenjouin turned towards the door. “We have to find him!”

“I don’t know where he is,” Ayukawa sobbed. “I don’t have any clues. Please forgive me, Tenjouin-san.”

“It’s okay, Ayukawa-sensei. I know you tried your best.” Tenjouin turned to her former teacher and gave her a smile. “You rest here. I’ll figure out s…”

There was a pause as Tenjouin noticed Ayukawa’s startled look, staring at the doorway. Tenjouin turned towards it to see what she was looking at.

Hinata Toragami stood in the doorway, her arms crossed.

“If you want to find Aoyama Shougo, I can take you to him,” she said quietly.

---

*Now that the Genex tournament is underway, begin to build your Genex deck! Remember, forty cards, no more and no less! But you can switch in cards as you will! But prepare yourself, the finals are going to be something special…*

---

***Tenjouin:*** *"To involve an innocent child in your schemes is unforgivable!"*
***Aino:*** *"Shougo-kun is kidnapped by an old man who doesn't want to see him at the Genex tournament… no matter what it takes."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"You have no idea the growth he's gone through! And now you want to kill him? I will not allow it!"*
***Aino:*** *"The man, as a duelist, offers Tenjouin one chance on her pride to save Shougo-kun's life, but can she win using someone else's deck?"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"I'm a teacher at Duel Academy. I should be able to win regardless of condition. But the risk involved… this time…"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time, on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Do or Die! An Impossible Choice'****."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"Not even a draw is an option in this battle. I… I will win!"*

# 22. Do or Die! An Impossible Choice

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

---

When Shougo came to, he was in an out of the way part of Duel Academy Island. He knew this place, having come here himself sometimes to hide out from the students and staff. He was certain no one would come to find him.

An old man with shaggy white hair and a mustache was standing over him.

“Aoyama Shougo, I’m here to kill you,” he said.

Shougo bit his lip. “Why did you have to hurt Ayukawa-sensei and the nurses?” he said quietly.

“Did you forget that you are Darkness?” the man replied. “I couldn’t take the chance that they’d try to stop me! By eliminating you here and now, I’ll stop the threat to the world.”

“I… I understand,” Shougo murmured. “I’ll try not to fight you…” He looked down with a forlorn expression.

“Good boy,” the old man replied, and quietly retrieved a knife from his knapsack.

*I’ve done this many times before*, he thought to himself. *But never to a child. Still… I must… for the sake of my mission!*

---

***YU-GI-OH! -0***
***Turn Twenty-Two: “Do or Die! An Impossible Choice”***

---

Asuka Tenjouin and Hinata Toragami were running. Tenjouin was running after Toragami, who seemed to know where to go.

“We have to hurry, Tenjouin-sama,” Toragami said, not showing exhaustion despite her brisk pace. “The man who took Aoyama-san will not be merciful with him.”

“How do you know where to find him?” Tenjouin asked.

“The man responsible for his abduction was a mole that was placed within my *zaibatsu*,” Toragami explained. “While within my company headquarters, he stole a deck that I’ve been designing… the ‘Dark Destruction Deck’. I think he took it to find out clues about Darkness.”

“Could he be planning to duel Aoyama-kun?” Tenjouin asked, having a difficult time keeping up with Toragami’s running pace.

“No,” Toragami said. “His intention is to kill him.”

“What?!” Tenjouin shouted. “Are you sure?”

“I am positive,” Toragami replied, quite simply and plainly.

“Then we have to hurry!” Tenjouin picked up her own pace and started to exceed Toragami.

“Don’t be in a hurry,” Toragami said to this. “I’m the one who knows where he is.”

“Oh… right.” Tenjouin didn’t want to question any further and simply followed her student.

*Tenjouin-sama, your spirit far exceeds mine,* Toragami thought to herself. *But don’t underestimate Aoyama-san’s strength, either. He will not simply allow himself to be defeated in this way.*

---

The old man stood over Shougo. He appeared to be trying to get his nerves together.

“You understand that this is for the greater good?” he asked Shougo.

“I know,” Shougo said quietly. “You hurt all those people in order to get to me, so I know it must be important. I just don’t want to be any trouble.”

“What do you wish me to do with your body?” the old man went on as he cleaned his knife, out of habit.

“I don’t care,” Shougo whispered. “Just do it quickly, and make sure nobody sees me afterward. It would be better for everyone if I just disappeared.”

“Very well then. By the power of Zadkiel, Azrael and Raphael, I will purify your soul. Die, Aoyama Shougo!”

He moved his knife to strike and then struck.

“Hold it right there!” Tenjouin shouted, her voice out of breath. Toragami had arrived first, but had said nothing; she stood with her teacher, arms crossed.

Almost as if on cue, Shougo rolled out of the way, dodging the blow. *Tenjouin-sensei came for me*, was the thought on his mind. *I can’t let her see me dead… not after what she went through to save me…*

“Are you here to stop me… Toragami… Tenjouin-san?” the old man said, turning towards them with an arrogant look on his face.

“Of course!” Tenjouin shouted. “You stole my student’s deck, kidnapped another student and hurt other students that were just doing their job, not to mention an old friend of mine! I’m not going to forgive you! Return Aoyama-kun now!”

“This is more than a mere child, Tenjouin-san,” the old man said. “Surely you are aware of how dangerous he is! We will not have a better time to strike at Darkness than now!”

“You’re wrong about Aoyama-kun,” Tenjouin replied. “He’s not Darkness. He was just used by that force. He’s different now!”

“How can you say that? You know that Aoyama Shougo’s existence is impossible!” the old man spat. “The longer this boy is alive, the greater the danger! We should put an end to this before the problem grows!”

“What’s your name?” Tenjouin shouted with sudden emotion.

“What? What does that have to do with anything, Tenjouin-san?”

“Just tell me your name.” Tenjouin’s gaze was firmly affixed on his now.

The old man’s brow furrowed. “Heinrich Wright,” he said finally.

“I see. Heinrich Wright… I have an Osiris student named Almaz Wright. His father was listed

as Heinrich. You wouldn’t happen to be here simply to check up on him, would you?”

“I have a mission from an important organization!” Heinrich shouted. “I will see it through to its completion!”

“The same organization Kiyotaki-kouchou is part of, perchance?” Tenjouin said with a deadly tone.

“That’s none of your concern!” Heinrich shouted.

“It is my concern if your intent is to kill one of my students!” Tenjouin replied. “I won’t back down! You won’t have Aoyama-kun!”

“Perhaps you’re not qualified to watch over him,” Heinrich quipped. “Would you like to stake your pride as a duelist on it?”

“I never back down from a challenge,” Tenjouin said, raising her arm. “As a graduate of Duel Academy, I *will* stake my pride, at your request!”

“Then if you wish to fight for the life of your student, why don’t you use his deck?” Heinrich said with a smile. “Then perhaps you’ll see the burden that he bears, and why he was so quick to give up his life. Unless you’re afraid!”

Tenjouin's eyes widened. Those cards that he had… had Heinrich seen them? Did he know that Shougo had changed his deck?

"Very well," Tenjouin said. "I'll use his deck. If I win, you will let Aoyama-kun back into my custody, and return Toragami-san's deck to her."

"And if I win?" Heinrich replied as he picked up two Duel Disks and threw one to Tenjouin.

"That will not happen," Tenjouin said as she caught it and placed it on her arm. "Aoyama-kun… if you please."

Shougo started to stammer. "Tenjouin-sensei, you don't have to…"

"Do as your teacher asks!" Tenjouin shouted.

There was no room for argument. Shougo took the pouch containing his deck and threw it to his teacher as well, who caught it expertly.

A dark shock was transmitted from the Duel Disk to Tenjouin's arms and through her body, which made her wince. *So this is what he was talking about…*

"Tenjouin-sama, you can win," Toragami called. "Don't doubt yourself."

Tenjouin nodded and turned to her opponent, who had put on his own Duel Disk and loaded it with Toragami's deck.

"Duel!" they both shouted.

***Tenjouin — 4000 LP***
***Heinrich — 4000 LP***

"W… why?" Shougo muttered. "I was willing to let him kill me… just so they wouldn't have to do this…"

"You can't be a coward anymore," Toragami said, her voice carrying the tone of authority. "You can't give up your life that easily. I know what you were trying to do when you dueled Tenjouin-sama last time."

"Toragami-san…"

"Dead or alive, you still hold that power… the power of 'Darkness'. It is one you will simply have to accept. Now is the time when the battles will never stop! Remember when *he* dueled for you. It's happening again. Is that what you want for your life? People risking their life in your place all the time?"

Shougo didn't ask how Toragami knew about his experience with the Duel King. Something in his

heart told him that it didn't require an explanation. She simply knew.

"Watch the battle, and give your heart to your teacher, and she will win!" Toragami shouted sternly. Shougo obeyed without further questioning, wanting to support his teacher.

"My turn, draw!" Heinrich shouted, taking his first turn without agreement. "I'll set three cards and summon Raiou in attack position!"

A suit of armor appeared on the field, appearing to support itself.

**Raiou** — *LV4 Light Thunder (1900 ATK)*

"Turn end!"

Tenjouin nodded. "My turn then… draw."

*"Dark Destruction Deck"… that must mean it's geared to destroy or neutralize dark monsters. Aoyama-kun's deck is almost entirely dark monsters. I'm in a bad position.*

She glanced at her hand. *But these cards… I think I have a strategy worked out.*

"First, I activate the card 'Foolish Burial'," Tenjouin declared. "I take a monster card from my

deck and send it to my cemetery. The card I choose is ‘Hound Dragon’!”

She fanned out Shougo’s deck, selected the card and put it in the graveyard slot.

“Impossible!” Heinrich shouted. “In my studies of Aoyama Shougo’s duels, he’s never used that card!”

“You mean you didn’t even look at Aoyama-kun’s deck before you tried to kill him?” Tenjouin replied. “You’re barely human, much less a duelist! In any case, I’ll make my next play now!”

*I’m taking a complete chance here… but my gut is telling me to do this. And I must trust that feeling!*

“I activate the instant magic ‘Cyclone’!” Tenjouin shouted. “I select a magic or trap card on the field and destroy it! Heinrich-san, I’m selecting your middle card!”

“I won’t allow that!” Heinrich replied, and the card on his left opened. “Reverse card open, ‘Declaration of God’! I halve my life points and negate your ‘Cyclone’!”

**Heinrich —** *4000 LP / 2 = 2000 LP*

“As I thought,” Tenjouin said with a smile. “That middle card is vital to your strategy. You can’t afford to lose it. But I’ll tear your plan to pieces with this next blow! Magic card… ‘Tempest’!”

Heinrich took a step back. “Impossible! Your luck can’t be that good!”

Tenjouin showed him the card. “Believe it,” she said simply. The heavy storm of the card’s magic ripped through Heinrich’s facedown: the traps ‘Darkness Absorbing Magic Mirror’ and ‘Holy Barrier — Mirror Force’.

“You can’t tell bait when you see it, Heinrich-san?” Tenjouin said as she prepared for her next play. ‘I hope your son is a better duelist than you.’ She then felt the jolt of electricity again as she placed her monster card on her Duel Disk. “I summon Cyber Dark Horn in attack position!”

A dark dragon-like machine with hooks around it emerged on the field.

**Cyber Dark Horn** — *LV4 Dark Machine (800 ATK)*

“Aoyama Shougo has those forbidden cards?!” Heinrich shouted. “Isn’t this further proof that his power is demonic? Tenjouin-san, the blood of your

students will be on your hands if you allow him to live!”

“You think you can scare me with that? I’ve seen darker things than you can even dream of,” Tenjouin said. “This school is meant to prepare our students for these kinds of things! And what’s more, we learn that the lives of all our students are precious! We must protect all of our charges! And we will find the way in which no one has to be sacrificed!”

“You’re a fool, Tenjouin Asuka!” Heinrich shouted. “You’re still a child, obviously! If you were an adult, you’d know that sometimes sacrifice is necessary to protect the world!”

Tenjouin ignored him. “When Cyber Dark Horn is normal summoned, I can select a level 3 or lower Dragon-type monster in my graveyard and use it as an equipment card. I, of course, choose Hound Dragon.”

An orange-winged dark dragon emerged on the field and howled loudly as Cyber Dark Horn clamped its mechanic body onto it.

“And Cyber Dark Horn’s power will now raise by Hound Dragon’s original attack points,” Tenjouin

went on. “So now it can easily overpower your Raiou.”

**Cyber Dark Horn** — *800 ATK + 1700 = 2500 ATK*

“Cyber Dark Horn! Attack Heinrich-san’s Raiou… Dark Spear!”

Dark Horn’s attack pierced Raiou’s armor and destroyed it, causing Heinrich damage.

**Heinrich** — *2000 LP — 600 = 1400 LP*

“You wasted your life on negating my ‘Cyclone’ and now you’ll pay for that,” Tenjouin said. “I set one card. Turn end!”

*Sho-kun talked about these cards’ desire to win overpowering their user,* Tenjouin said as her hand touched her heart. *I see what he was talking about now! And Aoyama-kun has these cards… it’s impossible that he would desire these cards for himself! He could only have been burdened with these cards by the power of Darkness that is still inside him!*

“Tenjouin-sensei…” Shougo said forlornly, understanding what she was going through.

“Don’t let your determination falter!” Toragami shouted. “If you lose, you forefeit your life. Never forget that… Tenjouin-sama… Aoyama-san! You’re fighting together!”

“My turn then,” Heinrich said, and drew a card. His expression became more severe and sour.

“Bad hand, Heinrich-san?” Tenjouin asked. “But then again, what can you expect when you steal someone else’s deck and try to use it as your own?”

“Toragami Hinata is just as large a threat as Aoyama Shougo, and I do believe you know this!” Heinrich shot back. “I’ll set a reverse card in my magic/trap zone and one in my monster card zone and end!”

“You must be terrible at poker, Heinrich-san,” Tenjouin quipped as she pulled her card. “Your face can’t hide the truth from me.”

“Attack me and find out!” Heinrich replied. He didn’t look concerned.

“I summon Dark Grepher in attack mode,” Tenjouin replied, as the warrior monster appeared on the field, chuckling moodily.

**Dark Grepher** — *LV4 Dark Warrior (1700 ATK)*

*He must be aware of Cyber Dark Horn's effect if he is reacting this way to these cards*, Tenjouin thought. *Which must mean his hidden monster is stronger in defense than in attack. It might have a flip effect, but I'm not going to waste any more time!*

"Cyber Dark Horn… attack Heinrich-san's hidden monster! Dark Spear!"

The dragon-machine drilled its way through the hidden card, which flipped face-up to reveal Honest.

**Honest** — *LV4 Light Angel (1900 DEF)*

It shouted in pain before it disappeared.

"I assume you're aware of Cyber Dark Horn's effect?" Tenjouin said. "When it attacks a monster in defense position, and its attack points are higher than that monster's defense points, you take the difference as damage."

"Don't patronize me, girl!" Heinrich shouted. "Of course I know!"

**Heinrich** — *1400 LP — 600 = 800 LP*

"Now, Dark Grepher…"

"Wait!"

Tenjouin blinked and adjusted her glasses momentarily to look at her opponent.

“You would attack me so haphazardly?” Heinrich asked. “My facedown could be anything. You may think I’m trying to bluff, but you might be wrong! Wouldn’t you be betraying your teachings?”

“Stop trying to waste my time!” Tenjouin shouted with anger in her voice. “Dark Grepher, attack!”

“But… but he’s right! What if that facedown *is* something?” Shougo asked with confusion in his voice.

Toragami didn’t respond. Instead, she grabbed Shougo and ran out of the wood with him.

Heinrich shouted as Dark Grepher approached him, and was knocked down by his blow.

**Heinrich** — *600 LP — 1700 = 0 LP*

“Now, on your honor as a duelist, you’ll let Aoyama-kun go, right?” Tenjouin said as her monsters disappeared.

“My honor as a member of the Illuminati is higher!” Heinrich shouted as he got up and took his knife back out of his pocket.

“Illuminati?” Tenjouin’s eyes widened in surprise.

Heinrich ignored her surprise. “Die, Aoyama Shougo!”

He threw the knife at the area where Shougo was, but he was no longer there. Instead, the knife landed just short of Toragami, who had returned to the wood, without Shougo.

“You!” Heinrich shouted.

“I knew you were from ‘that organization’,” Toragami said. “But now that Tenjouin-sama knows, what will you do?”

“Well, I can’t let either of you live, of course,” Heinrich said with a mirthful chuckle.

Toragami then picked up the knife and spun it in her hand to emphasize her point. “An unarmed old man against a woman in her prime and a teenager with a knife. I wonder who will win in that fight?”

Heinrich grit his teeth as he realized his predicament.

“My deck, if you please?” Toragami asked, squeezing the knife in her right hand.

Heinrich screamed and threw her cards to the ground, then ran away without another word.

“Aoyama-kun… where is he?” Tenjouin asked Toragami as the latter put her deck back together.

“I knew he had no honor, so I took him somewhere safe,” Toragami said. “I’ll take you right to him.”

Tenjouin nodded and followed Toragami. But her mind was abuzz.

*Illuminati… I’ve heard stories about that group. I thought they were all fiction — conspiracy theories. But… Kiyotaki-kouchou is from there, as well? What does this mean?…*

---

Shougo was watching the ocean tides move when Toragami and Tenjouin approached him.

“Thank you both for helping me,” he said. “I think I understand better. And I’ve decided… I’m participating in the tournament.”

“Aoyama-kun!” Tenjouin shouted. “I… I can’t in good conscience just let you go.”

“Tenjouin-sensei… I know you want me to be safe,” Shougo said, looking out at the rising sun. “But life isn’t safe. If it’s what you really want, let me go. If I die, then you won’t have to worry about me anymore.”

“No! I won’t accept that!” Tenjouin shouted. “It’s about more than just your safety, Aoyama-kun. You shouldn’t have to suffer.”

“I’m disappointed, Tenjouin-sama,” Toragami said, brushing her hair back. “I thought you understood better than either of us.”

Tenjouin gasped slightly.

“Life is suffering,” Toragami explained. “The children in this school don’t understand that yet, but Shougo and I do. The attachments we have, are what cause this suffering. To our friends, and to ourselves.”

“My body might be weak,” Shougo mused. “My heart and soul, too. But something inside me says… if I want to understand this happiness and this sadness, I have to fight. I guess that’s a duelist’s pride. And you can understand that much, can’t you, Tenjouin-sensei?”

Tenjouin ran her hand through her hair and looked out into the sea.

“Tenjouin-sama, you fought many dangerous battles in your childhood,” Toragami added. “Do you think you can shelter the next generation? We would rather be captured knights than surviving pawns.”

“I suppose I see your point,” Tenjouin said. “But I still don’t think I can accept this. Shougo is still not well.”

There was a pause as the three were quiet.

“You should go back to your dorm rooms and rest a bit before class,” Tenjouin urged her two students.

Toragami and Shougo simply nodded and went their separate ways. But Tenjouin lingered a bit, watching the sun rise.

*The suffering that our attachments cause,* she thought to herself. *I know all about that, of course. Because… even now, as a responsible adult that should know better… I want to see him…*

*And perhaps that’s why I agreed to hold this tournament in the first place…*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Cyber Dark Horn"***

*Dark machine effect monster, attack points 800, defense points 800. When you summon this monster, it can draw on the powers of low-level dragon monsters in the cemetery to charge its body! This card was only used by Hell Kaiser before now. How can Shougo have it in his new deck…?*

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***Shougo:*** *"And this is how the Genex Tournament begins…"*

***Chiba:*** *"I'm glad you're with us, Shougo-kun… it's not the same without you."*

***Shougo:*** *"You should be more worried about yourself! Especially with that new challenger…"*

***Aino:*** *"Masaki Ganryu, the world renown Six Samurai user of Obelisk Blue, challenges Chiba-san to a fight on the honor of two warriors."*

***Chiba:*** *"I don't know if I can be serious about this…"*

***Shougo:*** *"Chiba-kun, what are you saying? You can defeat this guy easily!"*

***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Ganryu vs. Chiba: The Way of the Warrior'****."*

***Chiba:*** *"I can fight seriously for the sake of another, but for my own pride? I don't understand this…"*

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

***CARDS USED BY HEINRICH WRIGHT:***

**RAIOU (Thunder King Rai-Ou)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Thunder, 1900/800)*
Neither player can add cards from their Deck to their hand except by drawing them. You can send this face-up card to the cemetery to negate the Special Summon of 1 of your opponent's monsters, and destroy it.

**DECLARATION OF GOD (Solemn Judgment)**
*Counter Trap*
Pay half of your Life Points. Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card, or the Summoning of a Monster Card, and destroy that card.

**DARKNESS ABSORBING MAGIC MIRROR (Shadow-Imprisoning Mirror)**
*Continuous Trap*
Negate the effect of a Dark-attribute Monster that activates on the field or in the cemetery.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE (Mirror Force)**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Destroy all Attack Position monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**HONEST**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Angel, 1100/1900)*
During your Main Phase, you can return this card from the field to its owner's hand. During the Damage Step of either player's Battle Phase, you can discard this card from your hand when a Light-attribute monster you control battles to raise its ATK by the ATK of the opponent's monster until the End Phase.

—

***CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:***

**FOOLISH BURIAL**
Normal Magic
Select 1 Monster in your Deck and send it to the cemetery.

**HOUND DRAGON (Hunter Dragon)**
*Normal Monster (LV3 Dark Dragon, 1700/100)*
This dragon destroys its prey with its sharp fangs. Its

attack is strong due to its sharply fast movement, but this has come at the cost of its defense.

**CYCLONE (Mystical Space Typhoon)**
*Instant Magic*
Destroy 1 Magic or Trap Card on the field.

**TEMPEST (Heavy Storm)**
*Normal Magic*
Destroy all Magic and Trap Cards on the field.

**CYBER DARK HORN (Cyberdark Horn)**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Machine, 800/800)*
When this card is Normal Summoned, select 1 Level 3 or lower Dragon-type Monster in your cemetery and equip it to this card. It gains ATK equal to the equipped card's ATK. During battle between this attacking card and a Defense Position monster whose DEF is lower than the ATK of this card, inflict the difference as Battle Damage to your opponent. If this card would be destroyed by battle, the equipped monster is destroyed instead.

**DARK GREPHER**
Effect Monster (L4 Dark Warrior, 1700/1600)
You can discard 1 Level 5 or higher Dark-attribute monster to Special Summon this card from your hand. Once per turn, you can discard 1 Dark-

attribute monster to send 1 Dark-attribute monster from your Deck to the cemetery.

# 23. Ganryu vs Chiba

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

*A large thanks go out to AxelDH (Lux-Nero on FanFiction) for helping me write much of this chapter's duel, and to Blue-Eyes White Knight for contributing the character of Ganryu Masaki.*

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"Grandmaster! Attack my opponent!"

An Osiris Red student named Watanabe shouted as a strange, aged Japanese looking monster attacked him, lowering his Life Points to 0.

“Oh, man. Good game, though. You’re a good player.”

“Hmph,” his opponent — an Obelisk Blue — said in disgust. “Is that all? I overestimated your spirit.” He wore his long, brown hair in a ponytail which blew in the wind.

“Geez… you jerk,” Watanabe said as he deactivated his own. “I just entered so I wouldn’t have to do the report, anyway.”

The Obelisk didn’t deign to look at the departing student. *As I thought… I can’t progress, until I face him. I have to find you… Chiba Katsurou-san!*

---

***YU-GI-OH! -0***
***Turn Twenty-Three: “Ganryu vs. Chiba: The Way of the Warrior”***

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The Genex tournament had started in the morning. Shougo had received his Duel Disk from Ayukawa in the medical office. He met up with Chiba, who’d registered soon after the announcement. It was ten in the morning.

“So, you decided to enter! Awesome, Shougo-kun,” Chiba said. “It wouldn’t have been the same without you.”

“Well, Ayukawa-sensei says my vitals are stable,” Shougo replied. “But if I start feeling strange, I have to return to the medical office as soon as possible. I’ll try to stick it out, though.”

“Good,” Chiba said with a nod. “You should do that.”

“So what’s your strategy?” Shougo inquired.

“I just need to be aware of what’s going on and I’ll be okay,” was Chiba’s reply.

“Aware?”

“Yes. You see, this tournament’s format is an interesting one. Since those who didn’t register have to write a report, there are surely many entrants who entered only to get out of having to do that report. The duelists who hope to make it to the finals are surely seeking those weaker people out to eliminate them early. It’s a bit of a dance, if you will.”

“And you’re waiting for them to take their Star points before challenging them?”

“Me? No, no, no,” Chiba laughed. “I’m just going to challenge whoever I can. I’m just here to have fun!”

Shougo rubbed the back of his head. “Mmm, is such a happy go lucky attitude really the way you want to go about…”

“Hold it right there, Chiba Katsurou-san!”

“What?” both Osiris students said as their eyes turned to where the voice came from.

The Obelisk Blue who had defeated Watanabe was confronting Chiba, hair blowing in the wind.

“On the honor of two warriors, Masaki Ganryu-sama challenges you, Chiba Katsurou-san!” he shouted.

“Wh-what?!” Chiba looked deeply confused.

The young man calling himself Ganryu scoffed. “Are we not in a tournament now?” he asked. “It’s fairly simple. Do you accept my challenge, yes or no?”

“On… honor? I don’t understand… but of course I accept,” Chiba replied. “What kind of duelist would I be if I didn’t accept any challenge given to me?”

“We shall see,” Ganryu said, activating his Duel Disk. “Are you ready? I have 3 Star points already, so I’ll bet 1 Star point against you.”

“Well, that’s all I have,” Chiba said. “I’ll bet my only Star point as well.”

He then glanced to Shougo, who stepped back a bit. They both nodded at each other, and Chiba turned to his opponent. Their decks were ready. It was time to battle.

“Duel!” they shouted in unison, as is custom.

***Chiba — 4000 LP***
***Ganryu — 4000 LP***

“*Dice Roll*,” the Duel Disks droned in unison. They flashed a spinning set of numbers, one through six, and eventually settled on a single choice. Chiba’s flashed 3, while Ganryu’s displayed 5.

“…Looks like first turn honors go to me,” Ganryu stated, snapping off his sixth card.

Chiba kept his eye on his opponent, trying not to think about his hand for now.

“I shall set one monster face down, and then a set card,” Ganryu announced as the two brown backed cards appeared in front of him. “Turn end.”

“My turn then,” Chiba said. “Draw!”

*I’m in a bad situation*, he thought to himself. *I don’t know anything about my opponent, and he’s challenging my honor. I don’t understand what he means!*

“Are you afraid Chiba-san?” Ganryu growled narrowing his eyes. “Come and face me!”

“It’s not fear,” Chiba said, meeting his opponent’s gaze. “I just don’t understand what you mean by ‘honor’!”

“Then you will when this battle is done,” Ganryu replied. “But for now… Let the trial of honor continue!”

Chiba bit his lip. *All I can do for now is play the best moves I can with the cards I have.*

“I summon Elemental Hero Wildman in attack mode,” he declared.

A dark-skinned, bare-chested warrior appeared on the field, grunting in preparation for battle with the large sword he wielded.

**E-HERO Wildman** — *LV4 Earth Warrior (1500 ATK)*

Shougo was admiring the monster when he was startled by a voice beside him. “That’s one of *his* cards,” the female voice said. “I didn’t think I’d see Chiba-kun use them.”

“Tenjouin-sensei!” Shougo said. “You’re here?”

“All the teachers are observing the duels to make sure no one cheats,” Tenjouin said. “I have nothing to worry about here, but… I do want to watch this duel. Chiba-kun’s opponent is something special, after all.”

*Something special…* Shougo wondered to himself. He then noticed something else. “Tenjouin-sensei… you’re wearing a Duel Disk!”

Tenjouin looked down at her arm as if surprised, then chuckled quietly. “Well, you never know what may happen!” she said. But Shougo was still puzzled at it. Despite this, he turned his attention back to the duel.

“An E-Hero?” Ganryu questioned raising an eyebrow at the barbarian. “I’ll grant this, its a useful card… But… are you taking our battle seriously?”

“Very serious, Masaki-san,” Chiba said, adjusting his glasses. “I have a stronger card in my hand, but I would be neglecting your facedown. Wildman is

immune to traps and, at the very least, I can see what your monster is. So, Wildman… attack Masaki-san's facedown monster! Wild Slash!"

With a twirl, Wildman cut the hidden card in half with his sword.

"Fool! My face down has nothing to do with destruction!" Ganryu stated as his face down monster revealed itself. "It was my monster you should've worried about! Arise, Shien's Footsoldier!"

Chiba took a step back. "Shien's Footsoldier?"

The card flipped face-up and revealed a monkey wearing samurai armor. It made animal sounds briefly before shattering.

**Shien's Footsoldier** — *LV2 Earth Warrior (300 DEF)*

"By destroying Shien's Footsoldier, you set off a signal," Ganryu stated as a large green flag appeared behind him. "When my soldier falls in battle, I can special summon a level three Six Samurai monster from my deck!"

The green flag was engulfed in a powerful green light, forming into a tall samurai dressed in neon

blue-green armor, with a tall thin bow clasped in his hand.

“I see,” Chiba replied. “But, I had no way of knowing that ability, until I found out for myself, Masaki-san.”

“True, but this is just the beginning,” Ganryu stated taking a second to bow to his samurai. “The monster I chose is Six Samurai — Yaichi!”

**The Six Samurai — Yaichi** — *LV3 Water Warrior (1300 ATK)*

“And he’ll be the one to show you the path of honor,” Ganryu went on.

“It looks like Chiba’s in a tough situation,” Tenjouin said. “His opponent is world reknown for his skill with the Six Samurai. Chiba’s deck may not be able to handle it.”

“No, I believe Chiba-kun can win,” Shougo replied. “His faith can get him out of any situation. You saw his fight against Watanabe-san! He can do it!”

Tenjouin smiled faintly, but was still concerned.

Chiba gulped a bit. *Six Samurai… oh, my. This is Masaki Ganryu! In my rush, I didn’t realize who I*

*was facing!*

He took off his glasses and wiped them on his hair, then put them back on. “So you’re *that* Masaki Ganryu,” he said as he placed a card facedown in the magic/trap slot. “May I ask why you’re facing a no-name Red student like myself?”

“I wouldn’t consider you a ‘No-Name’,” Ganryu retorted with his arms crossed. “After all, I’ve heard rumors of a few reds with talent that can surpass even some of the blues’.”

“Well, I won’t presume to understand your reason for challenging me,” Chiba said. “I’ll end my turn on that note.”

“Humph,” Ganryu scoffed as he pulled off another card from his deck. ‘That will come to understanding as well in due time,’ He said looking at his next card. “But for now, we have another matter on our hands. I activate the continuous magic card ‘Unity of the Six Samurai’!”

Chiba took a defensive posture as the card, depicting all six of the Six Samurai in a battle-ready position, appeared on the field.

“Don’t worry, this card isn’t meant to harm you,” Ganryu admitted holding another card from his four

card hand. “But this one is… I special summon Grandmaster of the Six Samurai from my hand!”

Rising up from the ground behind Ganryu, another flag appeared behind him, this one a dull gunmetal gray. A few seconds passed until the flag was sliced to pieces to reveal an older man dressed in cybernetic samurai armor with long gray hair. And his right eye… it was absent, replaced with a cybernetic one.

**Grandmaster of the Six Samurai** — *LV5 Earth Warrior (2100 ATK)*

“2100 attack points?!” Shougo shouted. “That’s not even fair! How…”

“‘Grandmaster of the Six Samurai’ can be special summoned if you have one ‘Six Samurai’ moster on the field,” Tenjouin explained to Shougo.

*Still…* Shougo frumped. *That doesn’t seem entirely fair.*

“And that was just a special summon,” Ganryu stated, not really caring about the orb of light that appeared around his continuous magic card’s body. “I can normal summon the Six Samurai — Yariza to the field!”

Once more, another flag appeared behind Ganryu, only this one fell to the ground to reveal a shinobi like samurai dressed in neon blue samurai armor with a spear in his hands.

**The Six Samurai — Yariza** — *LV3 Earth Warrior (1000 ATK)*

At the sight of his monsters, Ganryu bowed down towards them, receiving the same motion from them.

“Three monsters!” Shougo gasped in shock. “Chiba-kun! Don’t lose!”

“Now then… Yaichi!” Ganryu commanded as his bow wielding samurai took aim. “Destroy that face down magic or trap card he has on the field!”

“Wh… what?” Chiba shouted. “Yaichi had that ability?!”

“Indeed,” Ganryu stated with his arms crossed over his chest. “However, for his hard work, my fine tuned warrior cannot attack…” He smiled with pride at his monster as Chiba’s “Attack Nullification” was destroyed by an arrow from Yaichi’s bow.

“But Yariza,” he went on, “is a different story. Strike him directly, my warrior!”

“Direct attack…?” Chiba muttered, confused.

Yariza nodded towards his master before spinning his spear lazily in his right hand. Then, the warrior picked up speed and threw the spear right beside Chiba's head… Making a small spurt of holographic blood appear on the side of his face.

**Chiba** — *4000 LP — 1000 = 3000 LP*

"Chiba-kun!" Shougo shouted with concern. "Tenjouin-sensei, Chiba-kun had a monster! How could Masaki-san attack?"

"The Six Samurai have special abilities if more than one of them are on the field," Tenjouin said. "In Yariza's case, it allows him to directly attack the opponent. This is the power of the Six Samurai that Masaki-kun uses so skillfully. By gathering them together quickly, he can make the most of their abilities."

*Plus, I've heard of a combo he uses that is fearful*, she thought to herself. *I want to witness it for myself.*

"… You should pay attention in battle!" Ganryu snapped, throwing his hand towards the Grandmaster as Yariza called back his spear with a rope tied to it. "Grandmaster! Slay that… 'Hero'."

It was done in a blink of an eye… The Grandmaster appeared behind Wildman and sheathed his sword. When did he draw his weapon?

He was too fast. And with a loud click of the blade fitting into the sheath, Wildman fell to his knees and shattered.

**Chiba** — *3000 LP — 600 = 2400 LP*

Chiba winced. It should have been an honor to battle such a high-ranking duelist, but instead he felt humiliated. *I guess this is why I'm in Osiris still,* he thought to himself, as he struggled to keep his eyes on his opponent.

"It's still my turn," Ganryu stated throwing his hand towards his continuous card. "Now I activate my Unity of the Six Samurai's effect! Each time a Six Samurai was summoned, it gained a Bushido Counter. And by sending it to the cemetery, I can draw one card per counter. And I summoned two this turn!"

Ganryu immediately snapped off the two cards from his deck and nodded at them. "I shall set one card face down… And activate the field magic of 'Shien's Castle of Mist'!"

A large Edo-period style castle began to form around the two duelists, and the sky turned to night… Allowing several crows to fly about in the misty sky. And yet, Ganryu and his three monsters didn't seem bothered at all by this.

"Turn end."

"My turn," Chiba said quietly. "Draw!"

*If I don't do something this turn, I'll lose. Yaichi's cut off my ability to use the backrow as a defense…*

"Come on, Chiba-kun!" Shougo shouted. "Don't let this guy push you around!"

"Yes, Chiba-san," Ganryu chuckled. "Don't let me just push you around like a rag-doll. Show me a warrior's strength!"

*That's easy enough to say,* Chiba continued to think. *But a warrior can only do what he can with his own abilities. And a general is only as good as his troops! I just don't have any that are helpful! The only thing I can do at this point is a bluff!*

"I set two cards in my magic/trap zone facedown, and summon Command Knight in defense mode," Chiba declared.

The female knight decked out in red and brown armor appeared on the field and knelt.

**Command Knight** — *LV4 Fire Warrior (1900 DEF)*

“I must say,” Ganryu admitted eyeing the armored knight. “You’re one of the first not to attack my Samurai when I have my castle grounds among us.”

“If I attack, then I’ll be open to a counter attack and lose,” Chiba admitted. “I can’t afford to be one and out this early in the game!”

“Playing it smart is a trait of honor,” Ganryu stated. “But, are you playing smart enough?”

“What do you mean?” Chiba asked.

Ganryu remained silent as he tapped his forehead with the side of his finger.

Chiba sighed. He wasn’t going to receive an answer, apparently. “Turn end.”

“Draw…” Ganryu stated, grimacing at the card he drew. *Damn it… I can’t use this monster, not yet at least.*

“I activate a magic card, ‘Foolish Burial’!”

Chiba nodded quietly to acknowledge that he had no counter.

“With this card, I pick any monster in my deck and send it to the cemetery. I send ‘Six Samurai — Kamon’ from my deck to the graveyard!”

“Mmm,” Chiba said, adjusting his glasses again as he felt the impulse to say something. “Would a general send his troops to their death that easily?”

“… Do not misunderstand my orders,” Ganryu replied with his arms crossed. “There’s a tactic in war that often has living soldiers hiding amongst the dead in order to surprise the enemy once they drop their guard. Kamon is alive in my graveyard, and will appear when the time is right.”

Chiba looked puzzled, but let it go. This was apparently something he could not comprehend.

“Next, I’ll activate Yaichi’s effect once more!” Ganryu announced throwing his hand forward. “And I’ll destroy the card on the…

“… Left!”

Chiba nodded as his “The Warrior Returning Alive” card was revealed and destroyed. *I could have used that card, but I needed it to maintain my*

*bluff. Now I'm at a disadvantage, but at least I can stop him from attacking me this turn…*

"Now then… Yariza! Attack him directly once more!"

Chiba wasn't prepared for the blow as Yariza's spear struck him across the face again.

**Chiba** — *2400 LP — 1000 = 1400 LP*

"Tenjouin-sensei, why is Chiba-kun reacting this way?" Shougo asked plaintively. "Aren't these just holograms?"

"Solid Vision technology creates visual illusions that can overwhelm someone who is not prepared," Tenjouin said. "In laymen's terms, they're as real as the duelists want them to be."

*Chiba-kun… wake up,* Shougo thought to himself.

"Grandmaster… Destroy the knight," Ganryu commanded as his Samurai master slowly walked towards the Command Knight, drawing his sword with each step he took…

"At least I've got my head together for this one," Chiba said. "Reverse card open, 'Dimensional Imprisonment'!"

"*Nani*!?!" Ganryu gasped as his Grandmaster fell through a rift in the ground. "What did you do to my honorable warrior?!"

"In today's game, many monsters have anti-destruction effects," Chiba explained. "I know that yours do, as well. If I tried to destroy the Grandmaster, you would just shift the effect to another monster. So I set this card. 'Dimensional Imprisonment' — it removes an attacking monster from the game!"

"Good move, Chiba-kun!" Shougo shouted.

"Humph, for your information, Grandmaster doesn't possess that ability," Ganryu growled looking at his three remaining cards in his hand to calm him down. "He has a recovery effect instead."

"Oh… oops!" Chiba laughed uncomfortably to try to break the tension.

Ganryu smacked his hand on his forehead. "Turn end."

"My turn… draw," Chiba said. *He's right… I need to pay attention*, Chiba thought to himself. *He's got two cards set, and I don't know what that field spell…*

Chiba's eyes widened as he was startled with a memory that played back as if a movie in his head… *I must say… you're one of the first not to attack my Samurai when I have my castle grounds among us.*

Ganryu simply tapped his foot as he hummed a little tune from a certain samurai styled video game…

*Does that field magic raise the attack power of his Six Samurai?* Chiba thought to himself. *I don't see a raise, but it might be only in the Battle Phase. How can I be sure? Goodness, why am I thinking like such a coward?*

Almost as if he read Chiba's mind, Ganryu cleared his throat. "What's wrong? Afraid of the unknown? An honorable General would consider his options."

"That's just what I'm doing," Chiba replied. "But it doesn't seem I'm prepared for this battle. Still… I don't plan on giving up. I just need time to think of a strategy…"

"On the field of combat, one doesn't have the time to think of a strategy!" Ganryu announced pumping his fist. "But this is just a simple Duel Monsters game… so take your time."

*He's right*, Chiba said. *I've always thought of myself as a general hopeful, but I'm no general. I can't send people to their certain deaths. And yet I've somehow gotten into a battle where hope is dim. I'm just going to have to stick it out as best I can.*

"I activate the magic card 'Angel's Charity'," Chiba announced. "Drawing three cards and discarding two." He pulled his cards, then placed 'Single-Strike Samurai' and 'Necro Gardna' into his cemetery slot.

"Alright, then," Chiba went on. "I summon Iron Knight Gear Freed in attack mode."

The thick iron-suited knight appeared on the field next to Command Knight.

**Iron Knight Gear Freed** — *LV4 Earth Warrior (1800 ATK)*

"Hmm… Another knight…" Ganryu muttered at the monster.

"Knights have a bond, and a code of honor all their own," Chiba explained. "Command Knight! Show my opponent what you mean."

An aura glowed around Command Knight as Gear Freed's power began to rise.

**Iron Knight Gear Freed** — *1800 ATK + 400 = 2200 ATK*

“Command Knight raises the attack power of all Warrior-type monsters by 400.”

Ganryu just remained calm as he watched the aura power up Chiba’s monsters… as if he didn’t even care.

*He’s got something planned,* Chiba thought. *But I need to force his hand.* “Gear Freed! Attack Yaichi with Iron Slash!”

As the iron armored knight charged towards Yaichi, Yariza suddenly appeared in front of his comrade, taking the attack up front as Yaichi’s eyes widened at the loss of his comrade.

**Ganryu** — *4000 LP — 700 = 3300 LP*

“Nice try,” Ganryu said.

“What just happened?” Chiba gasped.

“The Six Samurai are noble comrades,” Ganryu explained turning his head to the side, holding back what appeared to be tears. “When one of them would be struck down in battle, another will gladly sacrifice themselves to save their friend. So, Yariza

sacrificed him self so Yaichi could continue to fight."

"And what about your field spell?" Chiba asked with a slight tone of demand in his voice. "I know it affects your Six Samurai's attack power somehow."

"Not mine," Ganryu corrected. "It affects your monsters. Since you have an E-Hero in your deck, I'm sure you've at least heard of the field card — Skyscraper?"

"I've heard of it," Chiba said quietly. "But don't misunderstand. I use Wildman because of his ability."

"Well, my field spell has the opposite effect," Ganryu explained holding his right hand up to allow a few crows to land on his arm. "When your monsters attack a Six Samurai, they lose 500 attack points."

*So, that explains it*, Chiba said. *I guess I'm lucky that I survived that. But it was really not a carefully thought out plan. Now he still has Yaichi, and I'm not in a position to set any cards.*

"… I assume you know about the calm before the battle," Ganryu chuckled. "Well, that calm is about to end."

“What are you saying?” Chiba asked, his tone now showing his loss of patience.

“… End your turn… And you’ll see…” Ganryu smiled knowingly.

*Might as well get on with it.* “Turn end.”

“And it’s my draw!” Ganryu announced pulling his fourth card into his hand before he pushed a button on his duel disk. “And during my standby phase, I activate my trap card — ‘Double-Edged Sword Technique’! And I think the image of this card is well suited to this situation!”

Two flags appeared behind Ganryu, one red and one blue, only to both explode and sliced into burning ribbons, revealing Yariza and another samurai.

The new samurai was dressed in red neon armor with several sticks of dynamite strapped to his chest, and on his face was a sickening smirk that looked like he was ready to use the explosives.

“I special summon Yariza and Kamon!”

**The Six Samurai — Yariza** *(1000 ATK)*
**The Six Samurai — Kamon** — *LV3 Fire Warrior (1500 ATK)*

“Kamon… the monster you sent to the cemetery earlier,” Chiba noted.

“I told you… he would appear,” Ganryu stated holding up another card of his. “But, now, I activate the magic card I drew — One you might be familiar with! ‘Reinforcement’!”

A card popped out from Ganryu’s deck, allowing him to hold the card up next to his three card hand. “I use its effect to add Six Samurai — Zanji to my hand!”

Chiba took a step back. He felt maneuvered into a corner. *He can only be planning something big*, he thought to himself. *But what?*

“And now… I summon Zanji!”

A yellow flag popped up behind Ganryu, flying high into the air as another neon armored samurai appeared next to the other three. This one’s armor glowing a bright yellow while he spun a glowing lance in his hands.

**The Six Samurai — Zanji** — *LV4 Light Warrior (1800 ATK)*

“Yariza! Attack Chiba directly once more!”

Chiba prepared himself again, but still couldn't quite handle the sensation of the spear striking him.

**Chiba** — *1400 LP — 1000 = 400 LP*

"And now… Zanji!" Ganryu stated as Zanji and oddly enough Kamon began to charge forward. "Attack Gear Freed!"

"…but Gear Freed is stronger," Chiba pointed out.

"Stength isn't everything…" Ganryu stated as Kamon leapt towards Gear Freed, pulling a small string on his armor…

A loud explosion blinded the duelists' and onlooker's view. Smoke billowed over the field, making Gear Freed turn left and right… Only to have a large glowing lance go right through his neck, sending his head and helmet flying through the air.

**Ganryu** — *3200 LP — 400 = 2800 LP*

Tenjouin and Shougo's eyes widened in shock at the sight of Gear Freed's head falling off.

"Any monster that Zanji attacks falls to his mighty blade," Ganryu explained.

“Why did Kamon jump in too, though?” Chiba asked, although he was shocked that Gear Freed was destroyed in such a graphic way.

“Even if Kanji battled,” Ganryu continued to explain as his three samurai dropped their weapons and began to pray in Japanese. “He would fall in the battle, but if one of his comrades created a distraction, he would be able to defeat his opponent without losing his life in the process. And the Six Samurai are more than willing to sacrifice themselves to help their comrades.”

Chiba grit his teeth. *This is looking bad for me*, he thought. *Well… I didn’t expect to win the tournament anyway. No! I need to stop thinking this way!*

“Now then… It is still my turn,” Ganryu stated taking the third card in his hand. “I activate the instant magic card ‘Mysterious Wok’!”

Yariza nodded and slowly disappeared into the mist of the castle.

**Ganryu** — *2800 LP + 1000 = 3800 LP*

“So, I send Yariza to the graveyard to skip the drawback to my trap card’s effect.”

“And gain life instead,” Chiba added. “Very well thought out, Masaki-san.”

“A general needs to make as many preparations as possible,” Ganryu replied fitting another card into his duel disk. “A single set card will end my turn.”

“My turn, then,” Chiba said. “Draw!”

“Fight, Chiba-kun!” Shougo shouted. “Don’t be afraid!”

Chiba looked at his drawn card and smiled. *Thank you,* he thought to no one in particular. “I summon my second Command Knight in defense!” Chiba shouted as the Knight’s doppelganger appeared on the field next to her.

**Command Knight** — *1900 DEF*

“… Great… Just perfect,” Ganryu growled, not liking the fact that he didn’t prepare for this.

“Both Command Knights give each other power,” Chiba said as their auras rose. “And because of their protection effects, they cannot be attacked!”

The Knights crossed their swords as if to say “Do not pass”.

“Alright!” Shougo shouted. “It’s Chiba-kun’s Command Knight Lock!” Tenjouin just smiled silently.

“A lock is good… However, do you think it’ll be enough?” Ganryu questioned crossing his arms.

*Especially since I have a monster that can easily erase one of those knights…*

“Until I figure out what your facedowns are, it will have to do,” Chiba replied. “I won’t send my troops out into an uncertain future! That would be irresponsible of me! Turn end.”

“… it wouldn’t have mattered,” Ganryu stated, pulling off his next card and immediately turning it around. “I activate the magic card… my own ‘Angel’s Charity’!”

Without hesitation, Ganryu drew the top three cards from his deck, his eyes widening at the sight of them. “I discard Enishi, Shien’s Chancellor and Six Samurai — Nisashi from my hand.”

“And now… To end this! I activate my trap card… ‘Ultimate Last Stand’!”

Three orbs of light appeared around Zanji and Yaichi, all three of them transforming into Kamon

and Yariza as well as a third new samurai, this one dressed in bright green neon armor with a katana in both of his hands that he spun over his head.

“By paying all but one hundred life points, I can special summon as many Six Samurai monsters from my graveyard to my field!” Ganryu announced as all five of his samurai bowed towards him, and he returned the gesture. “And I special summon Kamon, Yariza, and Niashi to my field!”

**Ganryu** — *3800 LP = 100 LP*

**The Six Samurai — Nisashi** — *LV4 Wind Warrior (1400 ATK)*
**The Six Samurai — Kamon** *(1500 ATK)*
**The Six Samurai — Yariza** *(1000 ATK)*

“And now…” Ganryu said. “My combo is complete… to finish you.”

“Finish me?” Chiba said curiously. “You may have many monsters, but you can’t attack with any of them.”

“On the contrary,” Ganryu replied. “This is our last turn. Chiba Katsurou, I have overcome the wall that is you! Prepare yourself!”

*What… what does he mean?* Shougo thought to himself as he and Tenjouin looked on. He felt a deep sense of unease churling within him. *Chiba-kun… don't lose here! Please!*

Chiba felt a drop of sweat roll down his face as he wondered what his opponent meant.

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Grandmaster of the Six Samurai"***

A level 5 Earth warrior, 2100 attack, 800 defense. Only one can be controlled at a time, but if you have a Six Samurai monster, he can be special summoned. The Grandmaster is the man who has seen many battles! If he's destroyed by a card effect, he can return one of his comrades to your hand, or even revive himself! Awesome!

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***Shougo:*** *"Chiba-kun! Don't let that guy make you afraid!"*
***Aino:*** *"Masaki Ganryu puts Chiba-kun into a corner with his move — his trump card that was renowned for destroying his opponents."*
***Chiba:*** *"Awesome… even though I might lose… my*

*opponent is really something special."*
***Shougo:*** *"Now's not the time to be impressed! If you lose here, then… then…"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'For the Sake of Honor! The Combo of Certain Death'****."*
***Chiba****: "What's so important about this match… that I have to work so hard to win? I can't use my 'determination of friendship' when I have no one to protect…"*

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

***CARDS USED BY GANRYU MASAKI:***

**GRANDMASTER OF THE SIX SAMURAI**
*Effect Monster (LV5 Earth Warrior, 2100/800)*
You can only control 1 "Grandmaster of the Six Samurai" monster. When you control a face-up "Six Samurai" monster, you can Special Summon this card from your hand. When this card is destroyed by your opponent's card effect,

**SHIEN'S FOOTSOLDIER**
*Effect Monster (LV2 Earth Warrior, 700/300)*
When this card is destroyed by battle and sent to the

cemetery, you can Special Summon 1 Level 3 or lower “Six Samurai” monster from your Deck.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — YAICHI**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Water Warrior, 1300/800)*
Once per turn, while you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, you can destroy 1 Set Magic or Trap Card. This monster cannot declare an attack on the turn this effect is used. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

**UNITY OF THE SIX SAMURAI (Six Samurai United)**
*Continuous Magic*
Each time a “Six Samurai” monster is Normal Summoned or Special Summoned, place 1 “Bushido Counter” on this card (max. 2). By sending this card to the cemetery, draw cards from your Deck equal to the number of Bushido Counters on this card.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — YARIZA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Earth Warrior, 1000/500)*
While you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, this card can attack your opponent directly. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

**SHIEN'S CASTLE OF MIST**

*Field Magic*

When a "Six Samurai" monster is attacked, the attacking monster loses 500 ATK during damage calculation.

**FOOLISH BURIAL**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 Monster in your Deck and send it to the cemetery.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — KAMON**

*Effect Monster (LV3 Fire Monster, 1500/1000)*

Once per turn, while you control another "Six Samurai" monster with a different name, you can destroy 1 face-up Magic or Trap Card. This monster cannot declare an attack on the turn this effect is used. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another "Six Samurai" you control instead.

**DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD TECHNIQUE**

*Normal Trap*

Select 2 "Six Samurai" monsters in your cemetery and Special Summon them in face-up Attack Position. Destroy them during the End Phase of this turn and take damage equal to the ATK of the destroyed monsters.

**MYSTERIOUS WOK (Mystik Wok)**

*Instant Magic*

Sacrifice 1 monster and gain Life Points equal to either its attack or defense points.

**REINFORCEMENT (Reinforcement of the Army)**

*Normal Magic*

Select 1 Level 4 or lower Warrior-type Monster from your Deck and add it to your hand.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — ZANJI**

*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Monster, 1800/1300)*

While you control another "Six Samurai" monster with a different name, destroy any monster this card attacks at the end of the Damage Step. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another "Six Samurai" you control instead.

**ANGEL'S CHARITY (Graceful Charity)**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 3 cards from your deck. Then, discard 2 cards from your hand to the Cemetery.

**ENISHI, SHIEN'S CHANCELLOR**

*Effect Monster (LV6 Light Warrior, 2200/1200)*

This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by removing from play 2 "Six Samurai" monsters from

your cemetery. Once per turn, you can destroy 1 face-up monster on the field. If you activate this effect, this card cannot attack this turn.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — NISASHI**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Monster, 1400/700)*
While you control another "Six Samurai" monster with a different name, this card can attack twice during the same Battle Phase. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another "Six Samurai" you control instead.

**ULTIMATE LAST STAND (Backs to the Wall)**
*Normal Trap*
Set your Life Points to 100. Special Summon as many "Six Samurai" monsters from your cemetery as possible. You cannot Special Summon more than 1 monster with the same name, or a monster that has the same name as a monster you already control.

—

***CARDS USED BY KATSUROU CHIBA:***

**E-HERO WILDMAN (Elemental Hero Wildheart)**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Earth Warrior, 1500/1600)*
This monster is unaffected by Trap Cards.

**ATTACK NULLIFICATION (Negate Attack)**
*Counter Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Negate that attack, and end the Battle Phase.

**COMMAND KNIGHT**
*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Warrior, 1200/1900)*
While this card is face-up on the field, all Warrior-type Monsters you control gain 400 ATK. When there is 1 Monster card on the field other than this card, your opponent cannot select "Command Knight" as an attack target.

**THE WARRIOR RETURNING ALIVE**
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Warrior-type Monster in your cemetery and add it to your hand.

**DIMENSIONAL IMPRISONMENT (Dimensional Prison)**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Remove the attacking monster from play.

**ANGEL'S CHARITY (Graceful Charity)**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 3 cards from your deck. Then, discard 2 cards from your hand to the Cemetery.

**SINGLE-STRIKE SAMURAI (Sasuke Samurai)**
*Effect Monster (LV2 Wind Warrior, 500/800)*
When this monster attacks a face-down Defense Position monster, destroy that monster with this card's effect immediately without flipping the monster face-up or entering damage calculation.

**NECRO GARDNA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Warrior, 600/1300)*
Remove this card in your cemetery from play to negate 1 attack this turn from a monster your opponent controls.

**IRON KNIGHT GEAR FREED (Gearfried the Iron Knight)**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1800/1600)*
When an Equip Card is equipped to this card, destroy the Equip Card.

# 24. The Combo of Certain Death!

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*The non-original characters in this fanfiction are copyrighted to Kazuki Takahashi, Studio Gallup and Toei where applicable. All other characters are considered public domain by the author and may be used freely, but he does request that you ask permission as a courtesy.*

*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (vm_). Thank you very much for reading.*

*A large thanks go out to AxelDH (Lux-Nero on FanFiction) for helping me write much of this chapters duel, and to Blue-Eyes White Knight of FanFiction for contributing the character of Ganryu Masaki.*

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"Lightlord Warrior Garoth," Toragami replied to her opponent flatly. "Finish the match."

The warrior approached Kobayashi and slashed him across the chest, bringing his life points to zero.

“Damn it,” he muttered, giving up his single Star point. “Why are you even taking my Star point? Shouldn’t you be going after the rats who didn’t even earn their place in this tournament?”

“And you believe that because you memorize rote details and endear yourself to the teachers, you’re a worthy duelist?” Toragami muttered as her Star points rose to seven. “You’re the third so-called ‘elite’ I’ve stripped of their ranking today. Being a good student hardly makes you a good duelist. Get out of my sight.”

Kobayashi knew better than to voice his true feelings, and left without further comment, but continued to mutter curses as he did so.

In the distance, a Ra and an Obelisk watched Toragami duel in admiration; a boy and a girl. The Ra boy, unusually, wore a uniform that was colored green, as well as a neckerchief, while the Obelisk girl wore thick rimmed glasses but was otherwise unassuming.

“Toragami-sama is quite amazing,” the girl said.

“Yes, indeed!” the boy replied. “It will be quite awesome for the great me to duel her!”

“You idiot!” the girl laughed. “We both know that I’ll be the one to do that… after I beat you, of course.”

The boy shook his head and closed his eyes. “The time isn’t right for that yet! We need to get more Star points. We’re wasting time. Let’s go.”

“Hmph… don’t get disqualified,” the girl said as she went her own way, while he went his.

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***YU-GI-OH! -0***
***Turn Twenty-Four: “For the Sake of Honor! The Combo of Certain Death”***

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**Chiba** — *400 LP*
**Ganryu** — *100 LP*

Chiba’s field consisted of two Command Knights in defense mode. While Ganryu had five strong Six Samurai monsters, none of them could attack.

Ganryu, however, was confident.

“And now…” Ganryu said. “My combo is complete… to finish you.”

“Finish me?” Chiba said curiously. “You may have many monsters, but you can’t attack with any of them.”

“On the contrary,” Ganryu replied. “This is our last turn. Chiba Katsurou, I have overcome the wall that is you! Prepare yourself!”

*What… what does he mean?* Shougo thought to himself as he and Tenjouin looked on. He felt a deep sense of unease churling within him. *Chiba-kun… don’t lose here! Please! Please don’t!*

Chiba felt a drop of sweat roll down his face as he wondered what his opponent meant. He then realized — Ganryu’s facedown. *It must be a trap that can eliminate my monsters!*

“So you finally noticed!” Ganryu laughed. “Behold… The power of a master general! Using his troops to the best of his ability! I relinquish Yaichi! Yariza! Kamon! And Nisashi! In order to activate…”

His card flipped face up. “ELEMENTAL BURST!”

Tenjouin blinked. “‘Elemental Burst’?” Her face betrayed a hint of disappointment.

“Tenjouin-sensei?” Shougo noticed this. “You look a bit… let down.”

“No, it’s a good move,” she said. “I just… expected a card that I hadn’t seen before. And that’s another card that he uses…”

“‘He’?”

“Never mind,” Tenjouin shook her head. “In any case, Chiba-kun may be in real trouble. By sacrificing monsters of fire, wind, water and earth attributes, ‘Elemental Burst’ allows its user to destroy all cards on the opponent’s side of the field. And since Masaki-kun has another monster left, he can attack Chiba-kun and win this.”

*But… Chiba-kun won’t lose here,* Shougo thought to himself. *I know it… because…* He felt his heart squirm uncomfortably in his chest.

Yaichi, Yariza, Kamon and Nisashi nodded and turned into balls of water, earth, fire and air respectively, and struck at Chiba’s field. The Command Knights shouted out and were annihilated by the blows.

As the smoke cleared, Chiba narrowed his eyes. *So, it's coming,* he thought to himself, as he saw Zanji ready to make his move. *But it seems I've drawn a bit of attention.*

Along with Tenjouin and Shougo, a number of other students had gathered to see the famous Six Samurai duelist, and the Osiris he'd chosen for his opponent. Several were wondering why he chose an Osiris, while others had noticed Shougo and wondering why Ganryu hadn't challenged him.

"There's nothing left on your side of the field, and I still have a monster," Ganryu said, clenching his fist. "I'm sorry, Chiba Katsurou, but victory is mine today! Look at it this way — you'll learn a lot from your loss here!"

Zanji clenched his sword in preparation for his master's order.

Ganryu pointed dramatically. "Zanji! Finish him off!"

At Ganryu's order, Zanji moved to cut Chiba down.

But Chiba appeared unconcerned.

“Why does Chiba-kun look that way?” Tenjouin wondered. “Is he trying to put on an appearance? He’s about to lose… he should be disappointed if those are his true feelings.”

“No, Tenjouin-sensei,” Shougo explained. “It’s not over.”

“What?” Tenjouin asked.

“Masaki Ganryu-san,” Chiba said. “I’m very sorry to have to put it to you so plainly. Please take this not as a judgment, but as an observation. You’ve been so busy setting up your combo that you’ve failed to take into account your surroundings.”

“What did you say?!” Ganryu shouted.

“You’ve risked your life points because you figured that you would make it a fair fight,” Chiba said. “I suppose you think honor has something to do with that. But duels aren’t about fighting fair. Duels are about winning, no matter what, and a good general understands that! For example…

“When I played ‘Angel’s Charity’ earlier, did you pay attention to the cards I sent to the cemetery?”

Ganryu remembered that the cards were ‘Necro Gardna’ and ‘Single-Strike Samurai’. However, he

assumed that when Chiba didn't negate Yariza's attack with it, that meant Chiba wasn't aware of its effect.

"If I put all of my resources into stopping small attacks," Chiba explained. "I will be defenseless against the real threat. At this moment, I activate the effect of 'Necro Gardna'. By removing it from play, I can negate one attack from an opponent!"

The shadow of Necro Gardna appeared and blocked Zanji's slash. Zanji retreated, helpless to make another move.

"Masaki Ganryu-san… I'm not sure what you want from me," Chiba said. "I'm glad for the opportunity to duel you, but you're asking me to put something on the line that I don't understand."

"Honor is the thing that all duelists must have!" Ganryu shouted. "The passion of fighting a worthy opponent, of putting their all on the line!"

Chiba shook his head. "If you want that kind of thing, you should try friendship," he said. "Friendship is where we put it all on the line, and we don't have to worry about the stress of combat. We don't have to worry about making a statement with victory."

“Making a statement?” Ganryu asked.

“In a duel, even though it is at its heart a game of chance, we cannot help but feel uplifted in victory and downtrodden in defeat,” Chiba explained. “It is human nature. To add even more things to worry for in a duel besides victory is to put a weight on the duelists’ shoulders, and ask them to bear excessive burdens.”

“You aren’t making sense!” Ganryu shouted, visibly irritated. “What are you trying to say?”

“Calm down, Masaki-san,” Chiba said with a laugh. “I apologize for rambling, so I’ll get straight to the point. I see that you care for your monsters very much. You honor their sacrifice, and what they do for you in the battlefield. But I sense you do not believe I feel the same.”

“What?” Ganryu mumbled. “No… you’re an honorable opponent for someone like me!”

“So you’re saying you made a mistake by declaring your victory earlier, then?”

Ganryu frowned and put his card hand down. “No, you’re right,” he said, with much chagrin. “I did underestimate you. I should have known that

you would have had a plan for this kind of situation."

"But that's my point exactly. I didn't have a plan. It was mere fortuitude. It's true I was looking for a way to get 'Necro Gardna' to the cemetery, but it was luck that I got 'Angel's Charity' when I did."

"No, it wasn't!" Ganryu shouted. "The gods always give opportunities to those who seek them! I'll end my turn."

Chiba looked quite plainly embarassed. *I'm starting to see what he means about honor,* he said as he reached for his deck. *Every student here has their own way of dealing with victory and defeat. In a duel, many believe that only the winner can feel the value of their own existence. But having lost many duels, I'm still here. And I know…*

"My turn," he said. "Draw!"

*I'm sorry, Shougo-kun,* he sighed to himself as he did. *If I do win this match, it will be on sheer luck alone. I'm still not a worthy opponent for you, I guess.*

Chiba looked at the card he drew and the two cards still in his hand.

“I set one card, and activate the magic card ‘Life Slashing Treasure’,” Chiba announced. “This card allows me to draw until I have five cards in my hand; in exchange, in five turns, if this duel is not decided, I must discard my entire hand. I have one card in my hand, Masaki-san, which means I now receive four.”

“Four cards?!” Ganryu shouted. “That’s an unfair advantage!”

“Are you now starting to realize the flaw in your strategy?” Chiba said as he drew his hand. “You value and honor the sacrifices of your monsters, but you’ve allowed yourself to lose sight of the true goal of a war — victory! And victory can only be had with resources. The army without resources is not an army at all.”

He then adjusted his glasses a bit, causing light to refract off of his lenses. “The combination I use most frequently is summoning Troop Commander and then using his effect to bring out the Rogue Mercenaries, dispatching my opponent’s monster while opening up a front for the Troop Commander to attack. If I haven’t used that combination thus far, the chances of me being able to execute that now are marvelously high, wouldn’t you say?”

“No! I believe in my monsters, and they won’t let me down,” Ganryu asserted.

“You can have faith in phantoms all you want, but I put my trust in mathematics,” Chiba said. “I summon Troop Commander, and use his effect to summon Rogue Mercenaries.”

The armored soldier appeared, and alongside him a band of warriors who, contrary to their usual appearances, looked stern and ready for action this time.

**Troop Commander** — *LV3 Earth Warrior (1200 ATK)*
**Rogue Mercenaries** — *LV4 Earth Warrior (1000 ATK)*

“All a soldier really needs is someone to believe in him. You give him faith, and he’ll give his life for you,” Chiba said. “But of course, I am delving into symbolism. The effect itself is quite simple. I sacrifice Rogue Mercenaries to activate its effect. Ambush Strike!”

The mercenaries leapt across the field and surrounded Zanji, who gripped his sword in preparation for battle. He was able to fight one off, but not before the others overwhelmed him. A Solid

Vision explosion occurred, causing Ganryu to shield his face.

“No! Zanji! My honorable samurai!”

“You bet everything on being able to finish it this turn,” Chiba said. “But sometimes, when you bet everything, you lose. You’re still in the tournament, Masaki-san, so I have no regrets.”

“Neither do I,” Ganryu said. “I am proud to lose to you… I was right. There is strong fighting spirit in Osiris Red! And I did underestimate you, and I apologize. I will not do so again.”

Chiba smiled a bit, and felt his glasses start to drop, so he pushed them back up with his finger. “Troop Commander,” he said. “Direct attack!”

Shougo gasped. “Chiba’s going to win!” he shouted. “He… he’s going to…” His eyes rolled in the back of his head as he felt his body’s consciousness start to swim. “Tenjouin-sensei!” he called, before he passed out and fell backward. Tenjouin ran up and caught him.

“Aoyama-kun!” she said. She suppressed the urge to shake him up, knowing that his body was in poor health. He needed to be returned to the medical office.

Ganryu reeled back as Troop Commander's holographic sword penetrated his body. He then managed to smile through his apparent pain.

**Ganryu** — *100 LP — 1200 = 0 LP*

Chiba's Star point counter raised up to 2. "Thank you for the battle, Masaki-san," he said, bowing.

"No, thank *you*," Ganryu said, bowing. "It was a most fulfilling duel. And I hope you understand more about honor now."

*Not quite,* Chiba thought to himself. *Why do I feel like I was the one who was imparting a lesson here?*

Ganryu turned off his Duel Disk. "My only regret is that I fear I will not face a more honorable opponent," he said. "Goodbye, my friend!"

Chiba clicked his tongue and turned to where Shougo stood, and saw his body being held by Tenjouin. "Shougo-kun!" he shouted.

"He passed out!" Tenjouin called. "The stress of the duel must have gotten to him. Chiba-kun, help me get him back to the medical office!"

"Oh no!" Chiba ran to help his friend. Something told him not to try to wake him up, but to simply get him to the medical office quickly.

Ganryu Masaki watched his opponent run to help his friend. He pondered on Chiba's words about friendship.

*Friendship is where we put it all on the line, and we don't have to worry about the stress of combat. We don't have to worry about making a statement with victory.*

Masaki smiled slightly. *There are worse things than the stress of combat, Chiba-san,* he thought to himself. *With those bonds of friendship, also comes the inestimable pain of losing that friend to death. And that pain may never heal…*

He drew his next card, and saw that it was his final Six Samurai card, "The Six Samurai — Irou".

*Or perhaps I am the weak one for relying on friends that never truly leave me?* he thought. *Let's see what this tournament tells us.*

---

Shougo was again in the care of Ayukawa in a hospital bed in the medical office, hooked up to an IV.

"Is he okay?" Tenjouin said.

“I’ll know more when the blood tests come in,” Ayukawa said. “But it seems Aoyama-kun is just exhausted. I told you it was a mistake to let him in the tournament!”

“I know,” Tenjouin nodded. “But he insisted. I still don’t think he truly realizes that there are people out there who seek his life. He’ll probably want to return once he wakes up.”

“I won’t allow it,” Ayukawa replied. “Although I can discuss with him who he’ll give his extra Star chip to.”

“I just don’t know if it’ll be that easy,” Chiba mused. “Shougo-kun is a fighter. For him to stay still is not in his nature.”

“Well, he’ll have to,” Ayukawa said. “We’ve taken enough risks with him already. Even if we are at Duel Academy, this is too much to go through for just a game.”

Chiba nodded quietly. It was a fair point.

“Come on, Aoyama-kun is okay now,” Tenjouin said. “You and I both need to get back to the tournament.”

Chiba nodded his affirmation again and walked with Tenjouin outside, but when they were outside the medical office, they bumped into someone who was holding a duel disk. The disk wasn't the same type as the Duel Academy Duel Disk.

"Sorry!" Chiba said embarassedly as he looked up at the person he bumped into. It was a young man with scruffy brown hair, wearing a red jacket and black shirt. He had a bit of a wrangly figure.

The man looked at Tenjouin and his eyes lit up in recognition. "Asuka!" he shouted, using her first name.

Tenjouin blinked. "Do I… know you?"

"You… you don't recognize me?" he said, looking a bit disappointed.

"I'm… I'm sorry," Tenjouin apologized. There was something familiar about him, but Tenjouin couldn't quite put her finger on it.

"Anyway, it doesn't matter right now," he said, obviously sounding out of breath. "Do you know where someone named Toragami Hinata is? I need to see her right away!"

“She’s participating in the Genex tournament,” Tenjouin said. “I could probably use her locator signal to find her. But… but, wait, who are…?”

“Never mind,” he said. “Let’s go!”

Tenjouin looked at Chiba, who shrugged. “I’ll come along, too,” he said.

“That’s fine,” the unknown man. “Just hurry!”

As Tenjouin ran following the young man, her thoughts were in disarray.

*There’s something familiar about him,* she thought to herself. *Why can’t I recognize him?*

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD: *“Life Slashing Treasure”***

A normal magic card that allows you to drastically increase the possibilities in a duel. You are allowed to draw cards until you have five cards! In exchange, you lose your entire hand in five turns. So have a way to settle the duel before then! It’s an integral part of Chiba-sama’s deck! Excuse me!

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***Chiba:*** *"Who is this guy?"*
***Aino:*** *"Everybody knows by now, so why keep it a surprise?"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"That's Yuuki Judai. Not everyone knows of his legend; only those who were in Duel Academy during those times…"*
***Aino:*** *"And he's come to the island to duel Toragami-sama."*
***Katsuki:*** *"Ridiculous! Legend or whoever, I don't care who he is! He shouldn't act that way…"*
***Toragami:*** *"You are mistaken if you think I did not foresee this."*
***Chiba:*** *"It's too crowded here, so Aino-san, could you finish this…?"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Time Overlap! Judai vs. Toragami'****."*
***Judai:*** *"I kept you waiting, didn't I?"*

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION**

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***CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI:***

**LIGHTLORD WARRIOR GAROTH** *(Garoth, Lightsworn Warrior)*

*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1850/1300)*
If cards are sent from the deck to the cemetery by the effect of a “Lightlord” monster you control other than ‘Lightlord Warrior Garos’, you may send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery, and for each “Lightlord” Monster discarded by this effect, draw 1 card.

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***CARDS USED BY GANRYU MASAKI:***

**ELEMENTAL BURST**
*Normal Trap*
Sacrifice 1 each of WIND, WATER, FIRE, and EARTH monsters to activate this card. Destroy all cards on your opponent’s side of the field.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — YAICHI**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Water Warrior, 1300/800)*
Once per turn, while you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, you can destroy 1 Set Magic or Trap Card. This monster cannot declare an attack on the turn this effect is used. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — YARIZA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Earth Warrior, 1000/500)*

While you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, this card can attack your opponent directly. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — KAMON**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Fire Monster, 1500/1000)*
Once per turn, while you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, you can destroy 1 face-up Magic or Trap Card. This monster cannot declare an attack on the turn this effect is used. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — NISASHI**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Monster, 1400/700)*
While you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, this card can attack twice during the same Battle Phase. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — ZANJI**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Monster, 1800/1300)*
While you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, destroy any monster this card attacks at the end of the Damage Step. If this card

would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

**THE SIX SAMURAI — IROU**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Dark Monster, 1700/1200)*
While you control another “Six Samurai” monster with a different name, if this card attacks a face-down Defense Position monster, destroy the monster immediately with this card’s effect without flipping it face-up or applying damage calculation. If this card would be destroyed, you can destroy another “Six Samurai” you control instead.

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***CARDS USED BY KATSUROU CHIBA:***

**COMMAND KNIGHT**
*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Warrior, 1200/1900)*
While this card is face-up on the field, all Warrior-type Monsters you control gain 400 ATK. When there is 1 Monster card on the field other than this card, your opponent cannot select “Command Knight” as an attack target.

**ANGEL’S CHARITY** *(Graceful Charity)*
*Normal Magic*
Draw 3 cards from your deck. Then, discard 2 cards from your hand to the Cemetery.

**NECRO GARDNA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Warrior, 600/1300)*
Remove this card in your cemetery from play to negate 1 attack this turn from a monster your opponent controls.

**LIFE SLASHING TREASURE** *(Card of Demise)*
*Normal Magic*
Draw until your hand contains 5 cards. On your fifth Standby Phase after the activation of this card, discard all cards in your hand into the cemetery.

**TROOP COMMANDER** *(Marauding Captain)*
*Effect Monster (L3 Earth Warrior, 1200/400)*
While this monster remains face-up on the field, your opponent cannot select another Warrior-type monster on your side of the field as an attack target. When this card is Normal Summoned, you can Special Summon 1 Level 4 or lower monster from your hand.

**ROGUE MERCENARIES** *(Exiled Force)*
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1000/1000)*
Sacrifice this card to destroy 1 monster on the field.

# 25. Time Overlap! Judai vs Toragami

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*The non-original characters in this fanfiction are copyrighted to Kazuki Takahashi, Studio Gallup and Toei where applicable. All other characters are considered public domain by the author and may be used freely, but he does request that you ask permission as a courtesy.*

*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG/dub names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

*I am beginning a new formatting scheme with this story, so please forgive any inconsistencies between this chapter and any previous chapters. I know it's my OCD talking, but still. Also, special thanks to ScarletWeather for beta reading this chapter.*

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Toragami, Katsuki and Aino walked along the Ra Yellow dorm grounds, after Toragami had finished

defeating the final opponent on the top 8 other than Shougo and Aino.

“Well, you have nine Star points now, Toragami-sama,” Katsuki said. “Are you… are you actually going to duel Naomi-chan?”

Toragami narrowed her eyes.

The gangly young man who had asked Tenjouin and Chiba to follow him stood before the three now, with Chiba and Tenjouin in tow.

“You’d better take some time off from this meaningless tournament,” the scruffy-looking man shouted. “The opponent you have to worry about is right in front of you!”

“Who the hell are you to talk to Toragami-sama like that?” Katsuki shouted.

“Be quiet, Katsuki-san,” Toragami said. “This is not the time for your tone.”

“To… Toragami-sama?” Katsuki felt stung at her rebuke.

“I know exactly who this is,” Toragami went on. “And you know who I am, too, don’t you… Yuuki Judai?”

Tenjouin gasped. *Tha… that's…!*

Chiba looked at his teacher. "Tenjouin-sensei…?"

"That's a duelist who's a legend among those of us in Duel Academy," Tenjouin explained. "He's saved the world with his abilities and his faith. That's my friend, Yuuki Judai."

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**Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms**
*Turn 25: "TIME OVERLAP! Judai vs. Toragami"*

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"So you recognize me now, Asuka," Judai said with a grin. "Did I change that much? Congratulations, by the way… on becoming a teacher at Duel Academy. I should have said so before. But there wasn't time."

"Did you come to challenge me, or to reunite with old friends?" Toragami harrumphed.

"No, you're right," Judai said. "I'm here to duel you, Toragami Hinata. I've heard stories of an undefeated girl, who came from a *zaibatsu*, who was

supposed to be psychic. I've also heard other things."

"From people with duel spirits?" Toragami pressed on.

"You're someone who's holding a dangerous ability," Judai said. "It seems you don't realize the power of it yet. I'm here to duel you to force you to realize that."

"And get me to renounce that power, right?" Toragami finished his thought. "And what makes you think I rely on this power?"

"You're a duelist, aren't you? And you're known to be undefeated. You have perfect reassurance. Nothing can shake you, even when you're near defeat. That's because you know, Toragami… you know you can't lose, as long as you hold that power."

"Aino… Katsuki," Toragami called to her friends.

Aino nodded, understanding without any further words being spoken.

"We have to go, don't we?" Katsuki said in dismay, but left with her friend at Toragami's behest.

“Do you want us to leave, too, Judai-kun?” Tenjouin asked.

“No,” Judai replied, activating his Duel Disk. “She and I aren’t the same. I’m not scared to have my friends support me.”

Toragami turned on her own Duel Disk without comment, deactivating the Star point component. Tenjouin made a note to tell Kiyotaki about the unregistered duel later; it was unlikely Toragami would be disqualified, but he should know about it.

“Duel!” the two players shouted.

**Judai —** 4000 LP
**Toragami —** 4000 LP

“Since this is not an official tournament duel, there is no ‘Dice Roll’,” Toragami said. “So you may choose who begins.”

“I’ll start us off!” Judai shouted.

“Feel free,” was Toragami’s reply.

“Draw!” Judai said, and then looked at his hand. “Okay! I’ll set three cards. Turn end!”

*What a strange move for Judai,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *He summoned no monsters, only set*

*cards. Are you testing Toragami-san? That might not be the best plan. I'm not sure you're clear on who you're up against.*

"My turn," Toragami said in her characteristic monotone. "Draw. First, I'll activate the field magic card 'Justice World'."

The area around them became a magical city, with several towers protecting it. Within the towers lied several buildings, appearing quiet and peaceful. Atop each of the towers was a bulb.

"'Justice World'?" Judai asked, looking around him. "What does that do?"

"You will see," Toragami replied. "Now… 'Charge of the Light Brigade', activate. First, I send the top three cards of my deck to the cemetery."

Three cards automatically ejected from Toragami's duel disk — 'Hierophant's Wand', 'Lightlord Monk Ehren' and 'Lightlord Beast Wolf'. A strong light glowed from it, and then the Lightlord Beast Wolf appeared on the field with a roar.

**Lightlord Beast Wolf** — *LV4 Light Beast-Warrior (2100 ATK)*

“When Lightlord Beast Wolf is sent to the cemetery, it is Special Summoned to the field immediately,” Toragami explained. “Now, I can pick a Level 4 or lower Lightlord monster from my deck and add it to my hand. I pick Lightlord Magician Leila, and summon her now in attack position.”

A woman bearing a golden staff appeared on the field, pointing it at Judai’s field.

**Lightlord Magician Leila** — *LV4 Light Spellcaster (1700 ATK)*

“Now, because I sent cards from my deck to the cemetery, ‘Justice World’ gains a Shine Counter,” Toragami explained, as one of the pillars in the city around them began to glow. “All Lightlord monsters now gain 100 attack points.”

**Lightlord Beast Wolf** — *2100 ATK + 100 = 2200 ATK*
**Lightlord Magician Leila** — *1700 ATK + 100 = 1800 ATK*

“Wow!” Chiba said, impressed. “Toragami-san’s monsters will get powerful in a hurry if Judai-sama lets that card remain on the field.”

*That’s not the wisest of plays to rely on against Judai-kun, though,* Tenjouin thought to herself.

*Toragami-san seems to know who Judai is. In that case, surely she has to know that Judai relies much on field magic himself. Justice World's protection effect can't do anything if Judai plays his own fields. What is she thinking?*

"I activate Lightlord Magician Leila's effect. By switching her to defense position, I can destroy one magic or trap card on my opponent's side of the field."

Leila bowed and crossed her staff against her chest, which started to glow.

**Lightlord Magician Leila** *(200 DEF)*

"I heard rumors about you, Toragami," Judai said, rubbing his nose. "That you knew what your opponent's cards were. Almost like you were omniscient. Well, let's see if there is any truth to that! Which card of mine will you destroy?"

"I choose the card to your left," Toragami said.

"Huh? Are you sure?" Judai looked visibly confused.

"Yes," was Toragami's simple reply.

Judai just nodded as his 'Hero Signal' was revealed and destroyed.

“Now… Beast Wolf, attack my opponent directly,” Toragami ordered as her Beast Wolf clawed Judai across the chest. Judai winced and moved backward a bit as his Life Points took a heavy hit.

**Judai** — *4000 LP — 2200 = 1800 LP*

“That’s okay!” Judai shouted. “Reverse card open… ‘Damage Condenser’! By discarding one card from my hand to the cemetery, I can Special Summon a monster with attack points equal to or less than the damage I took!”

“Great!” Chiba shouted. “2200 points… Judai-sama surely can summon something powerful enough to stand up to Toragami-san!”

“I send Elemental Hero Necrodarkman from my hand to the cemetery,” Judai said, sliding the card into his cemetery slot. “And summon from my deck… ‘Yubel’!”

An androgynous, half-and-half demon-like winged creature with a large, demonic eye on its forehead appeared. Its arms were crossed across its chest.

**Yubel** — *LV12 Dark Demon (0 ATK)*

Chiba facefaulted briefly. “Zero attack points?!” he shouted.

Tenjouin crossed her arms. “He was planning to summon her from the beginning,” she said. “It didn’t matter how much damage he took, he could get her out. And now, Toragami-san may be in serious trouble.”

“Trouble?” Chiba asked.

“Yes, if Judai-kun is planning what I think he’s planning,” Tenjouin nodded.

“I set one card and end my turn,” Toragami said. “And Lightlord Magician Leila’s effect will activate, sending 3 cards from the top of my deck to the cemetery.”

Tenjouin saw the cards that went into the cemetery: ‘Lightlord Warrior Garoth’, ‘Cyber Dragon’ and ‘Judgment Dragoon’. *Her ace went into the cemetery that early?* she thought. *That might not necessarily be a bad thing, though. In fact, it might be easier for her to retrieve it from the cemetery. After all, she has one card that can get it from there: ‘Prophet of World Creation’. I remember that card from her duel with the American student. But can she draw it?*

“And my field magic gains another Shine Counter,” Toragami went on, as another light turned on in Justice World’s city. “Need I remind you what that means?”

**Lightlord Beast Wolf** — *2200 ATK + 100 = 2300 ATK*
**Lightlord Magician Leila** — *1800 ATK + 100 = 1900 ATK*

“Toragami… is your reputation deserved?” Judai said before he drew his card.

“This is not you,” Toragami said simply. “Yuuki Judai, you are enjoying yourself. It’s that spirit within you that is demanding answers of me.”

“Spirit…?” Chiba said and then noticed that Judai’s eyes had changed colors, most unusually — one eye was gold, the other green. His expression was serious and full of bitterness, it appeared. Then Chiba did a double take. That monster, Yubel… not only did it have the same expression as Judai… its eyes were the same color as Judai’s! *Green and gold… weren’t his brown before?*

“You hold the power of the Light of Ruin,” Judai said, with a stark tone.

“Your vision is askew,” Toragami replied. “It’s true I know of the Light of Ruin. But I do not ‘hold the power’, as you think I do. You think the power is controlling me, but that is not the case.”

“That power is beyond the control of a human being,” Judai replied. “If you continue to hold onto it, it will control you instead. I’ve seen it myself.”

“What you have seen proves nothing,” Toragami said in a dark, sinister tone.

“In any case… let’s get this duel underway,” Judai said, his frown deepening. “My turn. Draw! And my plan will move on as I’ve intended. With Elemental Hero Necrodarkman in my cemetery, I can summon an Elemental Hero from my hand without needing a sacrifice. I summon Elemental Hero Neos!”

His signature monster appeared on the field in a heroic pose.

**Elemental Hero Neos** — *LV7 Light Warrior (2500 ATK)*

“Yes! He can defeat Beast Wolf!” Chiba shouted, and then blinked. “He must be worried about that facedown.”

“Brace yourself,” Tenjouin said.

“What?”

“He’s not going to attack with Neos,” Tenjouin replied. “Just brace yourself. Hurry!”

“Reverse card open!” Judai shouted. “Instant magic… ‘Super Fusion’!”

He placed ‘Necro Gardna’ into the graveyard slot, and a lightning bolt struck in the distance. The earth began to shake as a vortex formed in the middle of the playing field.

“What… I’ve never seen that card before,” Chiba gasped in shock. “What… what power…”

“It’s a card that is only held by Yuuki Judai,” Tenjouin explained. “You may not believe me, but he went through hell and back for that card. He is the only duelist who can wield it.”

A thought awoke in Chiba’s mind as his body felt the reverberating effects of that card. *Who would have thought a card would hold such power? Unbelievable,* he thought to himself, a sense of dread filling his being.

Toragami, however, did not seem impressed.

“By sending a card from my hand to the cemetery, I can fuse any two monsters on the field together,” Judai said as wind blew violently through both players’ bodies. “I fuse together Elemental Hero Neos and Yubel to create…”

The two monsters’ bodies turned into light and fell into the vortex, swirling their energies within. A flash of light blinded Chiba and Tenjouin. When their vision recovered, they saw a monster that was undeniably a fusion of the two, lowering itself onto the field.

“Neos Wiseman!” Judai shouted. “In attack position!”

**Neos Wiseman** — *LV10 Light Spellcaster (3000 ATK)*

“That was his plan,” Tenjouin said.

Chiba looked at Tenjouin, awaiting an explanation.

“Super Fusion can bring together the potential of any cards on the field,” Tenjouin went on when she saw Chiba waiting for her word. “It can create new monsters based on the powers of the cards it fuses. In this case… Yubel and Elemental Hero Neos combined to create Neos Wiseman. It cannot be

destroyed by card effects, and it inflicts damage to the opponent while healing Judai."

"Neos Wiseman!" Judai ordered. "Attack Lightlord Beast Wolf! Ultimate Nova!"

Toragami did not flinch as her Beast Wolf was destroyed by Neos Wiseman's attack and her Life Points lowered.

**Toragami** — *4000 LP — 700 = 3300 LP*

"And now Neos Wiseman's special effect will inflict damage to you equal to Beast Wolf's attack points," Judai said. "And I'll gain life equal to his defense points."

Toragami just narrowed her eyes as light shimmered around both duelists.

**Toragami** — *3300 LP — 2100 = 1200 LP*
**Judai** — *1800 LP + 300 = 2100 LP*

"Turn end," Judai said. "Toragami-san… if I win this duel, it should surely demonstrate to you that the Light of Ruin will not grant you the victory you seek. Will you renounce that power?"

"This light has nothing to do with my ability to achieve victory," Toragami said. "My victory is guaranteed because of the men and women who

have raised me, instilling their dreams and hopes within me. They have placed their future on my shoulders and I do not need a trifle such as this Light you so fear to ensure their success!”

“Then why, Toragami? Why do you ally yourself with it?”

Toragami pulled a card out of her deck. She didn’t answer at first. She closed her eyes instead.

“Do you honestly believe I was unaware of your plan?” she said in a hushed voice.

“What?” Judai blurted out.

“I knew all along that you planned to use that card. ‘Super Fusion’… the card that your other self created for you, to ensure that your power would be eternal. Isn’t that right, Yuuki Judai… or should I call you the Supreme King?”

“What is she talking about?” Chiba asked Tenjouin.

“Honestly… I’m not sure,” Tenjouin admitted.

But Judai was clear on what Toragami referred to.

“First, I activate the card ‘Soul Release’,” Toragami said. “I can remove from play up to five

cards in either player's graveyard. I am excluding… your Yubel and your Necro Gardna."

"What?!" Judai shouted as the cards were ejected from his cemetery.

*She could remove any five cards,* Chiba thought to himself. *Why did she only remove two? Why not remove Neos…?*

"Now I summon 'Prophet of World Creation' in attack position," Toragami declared.

**Prophet of World Creation** — *LV4 Light Spellcaster (1800 ATK)*

"And Prophet of World Creation's effect activates," Toragami went on. "By discarding one card from my hand, I'll place a Level 7 or higher light-attribute monster from my cemetery to my hand. I discard 'Lightlord Paladin Jean', to place 'Judgment Dragoon' in my hand."

"This is it," Chiba said, shielding his eyes.

Toragami narrowed her eyes. "Now… Jean, Garoth, Beast Wolf and Ehren! Let your sacrifices not be in vain. By the dying embers of your life, I call upon the representative of the Light of Ruin!"

Tenjouin gasped in horror at the realization of the meaning of Toragami's words.

Judai's eyes began to glow.

"Come out, bringer of the end, Judgment Dragoon!"

In a flash of light, the feathered dragon appeared to confront Neos Wiseman. Its aura now glowed with a light Tenjouin knew well. This was none other than that wicked Light itself.

**Judgment Dragoon** — *LV8 Light Dragon (3000 ATK)*

"I don't think you understand the situation here," Judai said as he eyed the creature. "Its attack points are equal to Neos Wiseman's, and you can't destroy it with its effect."

"I don't plan to use its effect," Toragami replied.

"She's going to suicide it?" Chiba asked. "But… why? That's her ace monster… wouldn't it be better to let it stand against Neos Wiseman on its own?"

"No," Tenjouin said. "Toragami-san's plan was always this, from the beginning. She's sacrificing Judgment Dragoon to create an opening. Now she

can open Judai up for a direct attack against his life points."

*Plus… she will prove to Judai-kun that she is not relying on that Light,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *But, Chiba-san surely understands that without me needing to say so. This is a moment beyond words.*

Toragami folded her cards into her hand. "First things first. Prophet of World Creation! Attack his Neos Wiseman!"

"What?!" Chiba shouted. "Why would she attack with her weak monster first?"

Tenjouin's eyes drew shut. "At that time," she explained. "When Toragami used 'Soul Release', Judai-kun didn't remove 'Necro Gardna' via its effect. He had used its own effect."

"Necro Gardna's effect?"

"It can block one of the opponent's attacks," Tenjouin said. "But you can actually remove it before the Battle Phase. If so, Necro Gardna automatically blocks the opponent's next attack."

"I see." Chiba nodded. "I didn't know you could remove it before the Battle Phase began. Toragami-san has good eyes."

The Prophet ran forward with her staff at Neos Wiseman, and Necro Gardna's ghost appeared to block the attack.

"Damn," Judai muttered.

Toragami's eyes narrowed. "Judgment Dragoon! Your mistress commands you! Battle Neos Wiseman!"

Judai was left with no choice. "Neos Wiseman!" he shouted. "Counterattack!"

Both monsters collided with each other. Chiba and Tenjouin drew their arms back to shield themselves from the explosion…

But when the dust cleared, Judgment Dragoon was still standing.

"What the…" Judai muttered with confusion.

"You're not the only one who can stealthily activate effects," Toragami explained. "While the Battle occured, I activated my facedown trap, 'Emissaries of Harmony'… which means, while your Neos Wiseman is destroyed, my Judgment Dragoon stays safe."

Tenjouin gasped as the Dragoon withdrew from battle. *I thought she was demonstrating that she*

*wasn't relying on that Light…* she thought to herself. *Could it be…*

"But Neos Wiseman has another effect!" Judai shouted.

"Did you think I was unaware?" Toragami crossed her arms. "You can summon Elemental Hero Neos from the graveyard. But to activate that effect, you have to remove Yubel in the cemetery from the game. And if you recall correctly… I removed her for you!"

Judai realized his predicament.

"Unlike you, I have demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice," Toragami observed. "Loss is an inevitable part of life. You still hold to a childish belief — that you can win any fight as long as you believe. You thought you came here in search of me, but the truth is, I am here to test you! Are you going to continue to live a life attached to your vain imaginings, Yuuki Judai?"

"Does she mean to say…" Tenjouin gasped.

"…she's here to challenge him?" Chiba scratched his head, then suddenly winced, hard. *Her aura… it's shining so brightly now, it's actually getting in the way of my vision!* He took off his glasses, then

looked again. It wasn't his imagination. She was glowing.

*What could this mean?*

Chiba felt a violent shudder go through him as an unnamed presence hung in the air.

*What in God's name is going on?*

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Super Fusion"***
This magic card can bring out the power of any monster card on the field at the cost of one card, and the summoned monster cannot be countered by your opponent's card effects. This card symbolizes power and all it represents; all that can be created, and destroyed.

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***Chiba:*** *"What's with his eyes…?"*
***Aino:*** *"Yuuki Judai… so the legends were true. He holds two souls within his body."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"So, Aino-san, you can be surprised after all!"*
***Aino:*** *"Toragami-sama isn't deterred, though."*

***Tenjouin:*** *"She's testing Judai-kun? What could she possibly mean?"*
***Chiba:*** *"I'm honored to witness this!"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* **Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: *'The Power of the Human Heart! The Light of Ruin, Judgment Dragoon'***. *Please enjoy."*
***Judai:*** *"So… it was hiding in that card. Then I'll just have to destroy it with my own power! I will prevent this Light from resurrecting at any cost!"*

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## *SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION*

## CARDS USED BY JUDAI YUUKI

### HERO SIGNAL

*Normal Trap*
Activate only when a monster on your side of the field is destroyed by battle and sent to the cemetery. Special Summon 1 Level 4 or lower "Elemental Hero" monster from your hand or Deck.

### DAMAGE CONDENSER

*Normal Trap*
Activate only by discarding 1 card when you take Battle Damage. Special Summon, in Attack Position, 1 monster from your Deck with Attack

points equal to or less than the Battle Damage you took.

**ELEMENTAL HERO NECRODARKMAN**
*(TCG name: Elemental Hero Necroshade)*
*Effect Monster (LV5 Dark Warrior, 1600/1800)*
When this card is in your cemetery, once per duel, you can Normal Summon 1 “Elemental Hero” from your hand without Sacrificing monsters.

**YUBEL**
*Effect Monster (LV12 Dark Demon, 0/0)*
This card cannot be destroyed by battle. You take no Battle Damage from battles involving this card. When this face-up Attack Position card is attacked by your opponent’s monster, before damage calculation inflict damage to your opponent equal to that monster’s Attack points. During your End Phase, Sacrifice 1 monster or destroy this card. When this card is destroyed, except by its own effect, you can Special Summon 1 “Yubel — Das Abschelich Ritter” from your hand, Deck or cemetery.

**ELEMENTAL HERO NEOS**
*Normal Monster (LV7 Light Warrior, 2500/2000)*
*A new Elemental Hero has arrived from Neo Space!*

*When he initiates a Contact Fusion with a Neo-Spacian his unknown powers are unleashed.*

**SUPER FUSION** *(TCG name: Super Polymerization)*
*Instant Magic*
Discard 1 card from your hand. Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion Monster card from the field to the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck. No effects may be activated in response to this card's activation.

**NECRO GARDNA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Warrior, 600/1300)*
Remove this card in your cemetery from play to negate 1 attack this turn from a monster your opponent controls.

**NEOS WISEMAN** *(note: This card is an Effect Monster in the TCG)*
*Fusion Effect Monster (LV10 Light Spellcaster, 3000/3000)*
"Elemental Hero Neos" + 1 "Yubel" monster
This card cannot be Special Summoned except by Fusion Summon with the above Fusion Material Monsters. This card cannot be destroyed by card effects. When this card battles an opponent's

monster, inflict damage equal to its Attack points to your opponent and gain Life Points equal to its Defense points. When this card is destroyed by battle, you can remove from play 1 “Yubel” from your cemetery to Special Summon 1 “Elemental Hero Neos” from your cemetery.

## CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI

**JUSTICE WORLD** *(TCG name: Realm of Light)*
*Field Magic*
When cards are sent from your deck to the cemetery, place 1 Shine Counter on this card. For each Shine Counter on this card, increase the ATK of all “Lightlord” monsters on the field by 100 points. If this face-up card with at least 2 Shine Counters would be destroyed by a card effect, remove 2 Shine Counters to negate its destruction.

**CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE** *(note: TCG exclusive card)*
*Normal Magic*
Send the top 3 cards of your deck to the cemetery. Select 1 “Lightlord” monster in your Deck and place it in your hand.

**HIEROPHANT’S WAND** *(note: anime exclusive card. Its dub name is “Emperor’s Staff”)*

*Normal Trap*
Your opponent draws 1 card. This turn, cards you control cannot be destroyed by your opponent's card effects.

**LIGHTLORD MONK EHREN** *(note: TCG exclusive card as "Ehren, Lightsworn Monk". OCG name is an approximation.)*
*Effect Monster (L4 Light Warrior, 1600/1000)*
I f this card attacks a Defense Position monster, return that monster to it's owner's Deck before damage calculation. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD BEAST WOLF** *(TCG name: Wulf, Lightsworn Beast)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Beast-Warrior, 2100/300)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. When this card is sent from your Deck to your cemetery, Special Summon this card.

**LIGHTLORD MAGICIAN LEILA** *(TCG name: Lyla, Lightsworn Magician)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1700/200)*
You can change this card from face-up Attack Position to face-up Defense Position to destroy 1 Magic or Trap Card your opponent controls. If this effect is activated, this card's battle position cannot

be manually changed until the end of your next turn. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD WARRIOR GAROTH** *(TCG name: Garoth, Lightsworn Warrior)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1850/1300)*
If cards are sent from the deck to the cemetery by the effect of a "Lightlord" monster you control other than 'Lightlord Warrior Garos', you may send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery, and for each "Lightlord" Monster discarded by this effect, draw 1 card.

**CYBER DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (LV5 Light Machine, 2100/1600)*
If you control no monsters and your opponent controls at least 1 monster, you can Special Summon this card from your hand.

**JUDGMENT DRAGOON** *(TCG name: Judgment Dragon)*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Dragon, 3000/2600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except when there are 4 or more unique "Lightlord" Monsters in your cemetery. By paying 1000 Life Points, destroy all cards on the field except this one. During your

End Phase, send 4 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**SOUL RELEASE**
*Normal Magic*
Select up to 5 cards in either player's cemeteries and remove them from play.

**PROPHET OF WORLD CREATION** *(TCG name: Herald of Creation)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1800/600)*
Once per turn, you can discard 1 card from your hand to add 1 Level 7 or higher monster from your cemetery to your hand.

**LIGHTLORD PALADIN JEAN** *(TCG name: Jain, Lightsworn Paladin)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1800/1200)*
When this card attacks a monster, it gains 300 ATK during the Damage Step. During your End Phase, send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**EMISSARIES OF HARMONY** *(TCG name: Waboku)*
*Normal Trap*
You take no Battle Damage this turn, and your Monsters cannot be destroyed as a result of battle.

# 26. The Power of the Human Heart!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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Toragami's eyes narrowed. "Judgment Dragoon! Your mistress commands you! Battle Neos Wiseman!"

Judai was left with no choice. "Neos Wiseman!" he shouted. "Counterattack!"

Both monsters collided with each other. Chiba and Tenjouin drew their arms back to shield

themselves from the explosion…

But when the dust cleared, “Judgment Dragoon” was still standing.

“You’re not the only one who can stealthily activate effects,” Toragami explained. “While the Battle occured, I activated my facedown trap, ‘Emissaries of Harmony’… which means, while your Neos Wiseman is destroyed, my Judgment Dragoon stays safe.”

Judai realized his predicament.

“Unlike you, I have demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice,” Toragami observed. “Loss is an inevitable part of life. You still hold to a childish belief — that you can win any fight as long as you believe. You thought you came here in search of me, but the truth is, I am here to test you! Are you going to continue to live a life attached to your vain imaginings, Yuuki Judai?”

“Does she mean to say…” Tenjouin gasped.

“…she’s here to challenge him?” Chiba scratched his head. *What could this mean? What in God’s name is going on?*

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 26: "The Power of the Human Heart! The Light of Ruin, Judgment Dragoon"***

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**Toragami** — *1200 LP*
**Judai** — *2100 LP*

Chiba gasped as his eyes fell on Toragami. *Her aura… it's shining so brightly now. I can't even see her anymore…*

Judai closed his eyes and smiled for the first time since his eye color had changed. "Toragami Hinata, was it?… Is this really what you believe?"

Toragami stayed silent.

"When this duel is over, Yubel will still be with me," Judai said. "I understand now; you've been fighting alone, all this time. Even when the Light of Ruin came to you, you still believed you were alone."

"I am alone," Toragami replied, very flatly.

"And what about those friends of yours that you sent away?" Judai pressed on. "Was it because you

thought they would distract you? Or maybe, because you're scared of hurting them…"

Toragami frowned deeper. "Do not distract me from my purpose," she said silently. Her voice throbbed with a subtle emotion that was easy to miss. "I end my turn. I send 3 cards from the top of my deck to the cemetery because of Lightlord Magician Leila, as well."

Another building on the field glowed.

"My turn," Judai shouted. "Draw. Toragami… this duel isn't fun for you, is it? I sense no spirit in you. You are too young to have this kind of chain around your ankle. Destiny is not something you should be too worried about right now. You need to have the heart to enjoy the duel!"

"Enjoy the duel…?" Toragami muttered.

Judai, Tenjouin and Chiba both perked up to listen.

"Duels may be nothing more than children's games for people like you," Toragami went on. "They are everything to me. Losing is just an inconvenience for you, but for me, losing means much more. I would lose the support of the people who brought me this far."

She closed her eyes. “But of course, someone like you couldn’t understand. You don’t have the kind of family that puts that sort of pressure on you. Your parents were kind and loving to you under all conditions. Such a lifestyle… you couldn’t possibly understand what it’s like to have to assert your existence through a duel.”

Tenjouin winced, knowing Toragami had struck a nerve.

“To talk about duels as if they weren’t important to me too… what do you know?” Judai shouted, suddenly angry. “You haven’t had to lose everything. To gain this power, I did not sacrifice, it’s true. They were taken from me, against my will. Isn’t it the same?”

“Shut up.”

Tenjouin and Chiba gasped in utter shock when they heard Toragami say such a line.

“You don’t know anything about what I’ve been through,” Toragami muttered. “When you have to surrender pieces of your own body, then you can talk to me about unwilling sacrifice! Until then, you shut your mouth and don’t speak about me. Are you going to end your turn?!”

*Toragami-san… she must be talking about her lost arm,* Chiba thought to himself. *Did she… perhaps did she give that up for the power of the Light?*

Judai shook his head. “Toragami, you see the world as cold and cruel to the life within it. If that’s how you must see it, then there’s nothing I can say or do to change your mind. But the day will come when you realize the world supports you as well.”

“You’re forgetting one thing,” Toragami said.

“What?”

“The Light of Ruin has granted me knowledge of all events. So I know that day will come. And I know the events that will happen afterward.”

“You’re talking about destiny.” Judai shook his head. “I believe you make your own destiny. And I’ll demonstrate now! I activate the effect of ‘Elemental Hero Captain Gold’!”

“Another new Elemental Hero…” Tenjouin marvelled.

“By discarding Captain Gold from my hand, I can take ‘Skyscraper’ from my deck and add it to my hand,” Judai said and did so. “But before I

activate it, let me summon the other card in my hand… ‘Elemental Hero Bubbleman’, in attack position!”

The water hero appeared on the field, cape flowing.

**Elemental Hero Bubbleman** — *LV4 Water Warrior (800 ATK)*

“In attack mode?” Chiba said, confused. “Even with Skyscraper out, it can still only suicide against Prophet of World Creation.”

“Just watch,” Tenjouin said. “This is the power of a legend.”

“With Bubbleman alone on the field, his effect activates,” Judai said. ‘Letting me draw two cards from my deck.’ He pulled them out, glanced at them, and smiled broadly. “And one of the cards is the equip magic ‘Bubble Shot’, which I’ll equip to Bubbleman now!”

A rocket cannon that appeared to shoot water appeared, and Bubbleman kneeled as he held it.

**Elemental Hero Bubbleman** — *800 ATK + 800 = 1600 ATK*

Chiba's mind was boggled. *How… how could he rely on his deck giving him what he needed at just this time? This is not how a warrior fights. The power of a legend… could it be…?*

"And now… I activate my field magic card! Go… my field of heroes, 'Skyscraper'!"

The towers of Justice World were shattered and replaced with the now-familiar rising buildings of Judai's signature field spell. Toragami, however, as usual, did not appear concerned.

Judai smiled, despite Toragami's lack of concern. "You know what I'm going to do, so I suppose you're not surprised. But let me make my play! The other card I drew from Bubbleman's effect… 'O — Oversoul', activates now!"

The image of the O on the card shined on the field.

"I can select a Normal Elemental Hero in my cemetery, and revive him! Resurrect now… Elemental Hero Neos!"

Judai's signature monster and ace reappeared on the field.

**Elemental Hero Neos** — *2500 ATK*

“When you played ‘Soul Release’ earlier, you could remove up to five cards, Toragami,” Judai said. “But you chose to only remove my ‘Yubel’ and ‘Necro Gardna’. If you really are omniscient… why did you give me what I needed to defeat you?”

Toragami didn’t answer.

“Well, it doesn’t matter,” Judai went on. “Elemental Hero Neos! Attack her Judgment Dragoon! Wrath of Neos!”

Neos’ power rose by the effect of Skyscraper.

**Elemental Hero Neos** — *2500 ATK + 1000 = 3500 ATK*

“So this is the effect of Skyscraper,” Chiba said. “Very helpful… but…”

*But Toragami-san’s aura is shining brightly,* he thought to himself. *Surely she’s expecting this, so why…*

Chiba focused his sight so he could see through the aura and at Toragami’s body. When he was able to do so, he noticed something strange about the lone card she held.

*The card in her hand… her hand is trembling…*

Toragami's head was lowered as Neos' attack approached.

*If that's a card that could help her,* Chiba thought to himself. *Why didn't she set it last turn?*

A thought occurred to him. *Could Toragami be… throwing the match? Is she trying to fight her destiny?*

But Toragami's next words made him think twice.

"Are you still frightened of the Light of Ruin?" Toragami asked Judai as she slowly raised her head. "Do you not yet see that a human may control it and force it to obey her own will? These things that you fear… they are nothing compared to the power of the human heart."

"What are you saying?" Judai said.

Neos' attack went through and shattered and destroyed Judgment Dragoon. Toragami trembled just a bit as her life points took a hit.

**Toragami** — *1200 LP — 500 = 700 LP*

A light on the field remained where Judgment Dragoon once stood, and flickered away.

**Elemental Hero Neos** — *3500 ATK — 1000 = 2500 ATK*

“Have you once considered that I know what actions you are going to take?” Toragami said in a stern voice. “To achieve anything, you will have to destroy my Prophet. Otherwise, I will revive my Judgment Dragoon next turn and you will lose. You have no cards in your hand. Show me this power that you put your trust in, Yuuki Judai!”

“I’d be glad to! Bubbleman! Attack Toragami’s Prophet with your Bubble Shot!”

As Bubbleman prepared to attack, his power raised up via the spell as well.

**Elemental Hero Bubbleman** — *1600 ATK + 1000 = 2600 ATK*

Tenjouin gasped. “Toragami will take 800 points of damage from this next attack,” she said. “If Judai-kun’s next attack hits, Toragami-san will have lost.”

Chiba shook his head quietly. “Tenjouin-sensei,” he said. “The power of a legend is one thing… but think about it. Do you think Toragami-san would have come to this match unprepared? If her power is what she claims it to be?”

“Judai-kun’s power surpasses destiny, though,” Tenjouin replied. “I’ve seen it with my own eyes too many times to doubt it.”

Chiba sighed. “Toragami-san, though…”

Toragami’s hand trembled once more, her head lowered as Bubbleman’s shot approached. She then raised her head, and there was something fierce in her eyes.

*I think we’re about to see what her true plan is,* Chiba thought quietly to himself.

“Did you really think that because my field is free of traps, that you’re safe?” she asked quietly.

“Wha-what?” Judai gasped.

“You should know this better than anyone,” Toragami said, her emotions uncharacteriscally rising. “Because the card in my hand… it’s telling me that it’s disappointed in you. It’s telling me to remind you now, and for the rest of your days as a duelist… never underestimate an opponent!”

Tenjouin’s eyes widened suddenly. “Could it be…?”

But Chiba already knew what the card was. He had figured it out when Toragami allowed her ace to

be destroyed. *She allowed Judgment Dragoon to be killed, and waited until now to play it. Toragami Hinata… what exactly are you trying to tell Yuuki Judai here?*

Toragami spoke and moved with such absolute determination that it frightened Tenjouin, Chiba and Judai alike.

“The card in my hand… is ‘Honest’!”

“H-Honest?” Judai choked.

“I suppose it has been so long that you’ve forgotten what it does? By discarding Honest, the power of your monster is added to my Prophet’s,” Toragami explained as she discarded the card to her graveyard. “Prophet! Shed your veil of concern for the physical world, and show my opponent the power that only God can wield!”

“What?” Tenjouin shouted. “What kind of words are those?”

“Impossible…” Chiba gasped and closed his eyes. But Toragami’s aura was so bright now that he could literally not see anything. Even when his eyes were closed, the light bleached his vision.

And the Prophet, as bidden, tore the veil off from her face, revealing a great beauty. Behind her back, feathery wings appeared and rose menacingly over her body.

“Honest Wings!” Toragami shouted.

**Prophet of World Creation** — *1800 ATK + 2600 = 4400 ATK*

The Prophet then pointed her staff at the approaching water attack, and blasted light out which shattered the Bubble Shot gun.

**Elemental Hero Bubbleman** — *2600 — 1000 = 1600 ATK*

**Elemental Hero Bubbleman** — *1600 — 800 = 800 ATK*

“But when Bubbleman would be destroyed,” Judai said. “Bubble Shot is destroyed instead, and battle damage goes to 0,” he said.

Toragami narrowed her eyes. “It is pointless to continue this match,” she said. “You know that, don’t you?”

Judai sighed and just smiled. “I would have to be some kind of coward to not go on now,” he said. “Turn end.”

**Prophet of World Creation** — *4400 ATK — 2600 = 1800 ATK*

Toragami's face showed obvious disgust. "I discard the card I drew to activate my Prophet's effect," she said, not even looking at the card she drew. "And summon my envoy of victory, Judgment Dragoon!"

**Judgment Dragoon** — *3000 ATK*

Judai's face had a more happy expression; his eyes were their normal color again. "That's an awesome monster," he said. "I didn't appreciate it before because I was caught up in having to defeat you. But it really is great!"

Tenjouin looked at the dragon. "The light that was around it is gone," she observed.

Chiba noticed this as well. The light had faded enough so he could see again. "Could it be that by sacrificing it earlier, she eliminated the evil of the Light?" he thought aloud.

"I don't have enough life points left to activate its effect," Toragami said with a deep, stern face. "But that barely matters at this point, does it? The target of my attack really makes no difference. I would

merely prolong this unnecessarily by attacking Neos.”

“So… it’s up to you, Toragami,” Judai replied. “Who will you have your monster battle?”

“Judgment Dragoon… your target…” Toragami said, thrusting her hand dramatically. “Is Bubbleman! End my opponent’s fantasy now!”

Judgment Dragoon roared and shot a brilliant blast of light at Bubbleman, who was unable to resist its attack.

Tenjouin and Chiba covered their faces as Judgment Dragoon’s light radiated on the field. Judai shouted as the dragon’s attack penetrated Bubbleman and struck him, and he dropped to one knee, defeated.

**Judai** — *2100 LP — 2200 = 0 LP*

“The dream that you held of your life is over,” Toragami stated. “Wake up and face reality, Yuuki Judai. Your destiny is in the darkness. You have no future. Do not come to me again.” She turned and walked away.

“Wait!” Tenjouin shouted.

Toragami turned slightly.

“You shouldn’t talk to him so disrespectfully,” Tenjouin said. “I am still your teacher and you are still my student. Toragami-san, Judai-kun is not weak. He walked through hell and back to help his friends.”

“He did not do that because he wished to, though,” Toragami replied. “His sacrifice was against his will. If it had been up to him, he would have continued his carefree lifestyle. He was compelled to walk through hell, because he did not want to give up his bonds.”

“Whatever you believe about his motives,” Tenjouin muttered. clenching her fist slightly. “You don’t know him either!”

“We must talk about this later, Tenjouin-sama,” Toragami said, turning away once more and continuing to walk away from the field. “If I were to tell you the truth now, you would not understand, and merely continue to be angry with me. Feel that anger if you must, but it does you no favors.”

Chiba narrowed his eyes. *That Toragami… you are so wrong on this. The day will come when I will show you myself. I promise!*

Judai seemed to be drained from his defeat, and he grunted a bit, grasping his chest.

“Judai!” Tenjouin ran to her friend.

“Toragami Hinata…” Judai said to himself. “What a person to have defeated me… I guess she did teach me a lesson, though. I was starting to not enjoy the duel because I wanted to defeat the Light of Ruin so badly…”

“Judai-kun?” Tenjouin wondered about whether or not he was okay.

“She’s right, anyway,” Judai chuckled. “I don’t have a future. Not a set one, anyway. The future is what I make of it!”

Tenjouin found the werewithal to smile just a bit.

“Toragami!” Judai called. “I’ll believe that you’re in control for now. But be wary! You still have time to surrender that power yourself!”

Toragami didn’t appear to listen, but her thoughts were manifold. *That fool truly understands nothing*, she said to herself as she walked further away from the three.

“Well… there’s just one more matter to settle before I leave this island for good,” Judai said, and

turned to his friend.

Suddenly, butterflies flew in Tenjouin's stomach. She knew… in her heart, she knew… this was the moment she had been both looking forward to and dreading since starting the Genex tournament.

Judai closed his eyes and smiled. "Let's settle it between us, once and for all… Asuka!"

There was no time for words or hesitation.

"Chiba-san," Tenjouin said. "We have to do this alone."

"I understand," Chiba said, although he thought it was a shame he couldn't witness this.

"You don't have to go anywhere if you want to seek opponents here," she said. "We're going to do this somewhere else…"

"O… okay…" Chiba nodded.

Tenjouin looked at her friend, who nodded as well. The location had been selected.

*I knew there was a reason I put on my Duel Disk during this tournament,* she thought to herself. *Yuuki Judai… I'll show you how far I've come right now!*

***TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: The Effect Card, "Honest"***

Level four Light Angel, attack power 1100, defense power 1900. You may return this card to your hand when it is face up on the field during your turn. More importantly, when a Light-attribute card you control is in battle, you can discard this card from your hand to add the battle power of the card you are attacking to the monster's battle power!

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***Aino:*** *"The sun rises, and the day begins. Many things happen, and a legend is created. The moon appears, night falls. A boy and a girl meet on the riverside. This is not the story of that legend. This is the story of the boy behind the legend, and the girl who watched him go. Now, as a man and a woman, they are reunited, and their true feelings will be exposed in the true language that they have learned. This is the dawn of a new day in this world of the young and the restless. This is the duel between Yuuki Judai and Tenjouin Asuka. Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Unseen Tears! The Legacy of Yuuki Judai'****. Please enjoy."*

***Tenjouin:*** *"The feelings I have for him will be*

*revealed…"*
***Judai:*** *"Gotcha… it was a fun duel…"*

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***SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION***

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**CARDS USED BY JUDAI YUUKI:**

**NEOS WISEMAN** *(note: This card is an Effect Monster in the TCG)*
*Fusion Effect Monster (LV10 Light Spellcaster, 3000/3000)*
"Elemental Hero Neos" + 1 "Yubel" monster
This card cannot be Special Summoned except by Fusion Summon with the above Fusion Material Monsters. This card cannot be destroyed by card effects. When this card battles an opponent's monster, inflict damage equal to its Attack points to your opponent and gain Life Points equal to its Defense points. When this card is destroyed by battle, you can remove from play 1 "Yubel" from your cemetery to Special Summon 1 "Elemental Hero Neos" from your cemetery.

**ELEMENTAL HERO CAPTAIN GOLD**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 2100/800)*

You can discard this card to the cemetery to add 1 “Skyscraper” from your Deck to your hand. If “Skyscraper” is not on the field, destroy this face-up card.

**SKYSCRAPER**
*Field Magic*
When an “Elemental Hero” monster attacks, during Damage Calculation only, if its Attack points are lower than its attack target’s Attack points, raise the “Elemental Hero” monster’s Attack by 1000.

**ELEMENTAL HERO BUBBLEMAN**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Warrior, 800/120)*
If this is the only card in your hand, you can Special Summon it. If you have no other cards on your field when this card is Summoned, you can draw 2 cards.

**BUBBLE SHOT** *(TCG name: Bubble Blaster)*
*Equip Magic*
Equip only to “Elemental Hero Bubbleman”. Raise the equipped monster’s Attack points by 800. If the equipped monster would be destroyed in battle, destroy this card instead, and Battle Damage becomes 0.

**O — OVERSOUL**
*Normal Magic*

Special Summon 1 Normal “Elemental Hero” Monster from your cemetery.

**ELEMENTAL HERO NEOS**
*Normal Monster (LV7 Light Warrior, 2500/2000)*
A new Elemental Hero has arrived from Neo Space! When he initiates a Contact Fusion with a Neo-Spacian his unknown powers are unleashed.

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**CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI:**

**JUSTICE WORLD** *(TCG name: Realm of Light)*
*Field Magic*
When cards are sent from your deck to the cemetery, place 1 Shine Counter on this card. For each Shine Counter on this card, increase the ATK of all “Lightlord” monsters on the field by 100 points. If this face-up card with at least 2 Shine Counters would be destroyed by a card effect, remove 2 Shine Counters to negate its destruction.

**JUDGMENT DRAGOON** *(TCG name: Judgment Dragon)*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Dragon, 3000/2600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except when

there are 4 or more unique “Lightlord” Monsters in your cemetery. By paying 1000 Life Points, destroy all cards on the field except this one. During your End Phase, send 4 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**EMISSARIES OF HARMONY** *(TCG name: Waboku)*
*Normal Trap*
You take no Battle Damage this turn, and your Monsters cannot be destroyed as a result of battle.

**PROPHET OF WORLD CREATION** *(TCG name: Herald of Creation)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Spellcaster, 1800/600)*
Once per turn, you can discard 1 card from your hand to add 1 Level 7 or higher monster from your cemetery to your hand.

**HONEST**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Angel, 1100/1900)*
During your Main Phase, you can return this card from the field to its owner’s hand. During the Damage Step of either player’s Battle Phase, you can discard this card from your hand when a Light-attribute monster you control battles to raise its Attack points by the Attack of the opponent’s monster until the End Phase.

# 27. The Legacy of Yuuki Judai

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 27: "The Unseen Tears! The Legacy of Yuuki Judai"***

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It was a quiet dusk as Asuka Tenjouin and Judai Yuuki stood on the harbor of Duel Academy. The wind blew through both duelists' hair. Even though they'd both grown and gone through much, their

bodies did not show it. Although they were a little taller, countenances a little more stiff, they still looked like the same duelists from their earliest meeting at the school.

Their clothing had changed quite a bit, although that change was superficial. Asuka now wore the outfit of an Obelisk Blue professor and a pair of glasses, while Judai's Osiris Red jacket, unbuttoned, was, while clean and kempt, obviousy well worn. It had seen its share of travels.

They stared at each other silently for awhile. Tenjouin's face was the picture of determination, while Judai wore the broad smile he always did for an exciting duel.

No other word was needed between them but…

"Duel!" they both shouted.

**Tenjouin** — *4000 LP*
**Judai** — *4000 LP*

"If you don't mind, Asuka, I'll start us off!" Judai said, pulling his card. "It's been so long, and I'm so excited, I just can't stand it!"

Tenjouin chuckled. "Do as you wish," she murmured.

*Idiot,* she thought to herself. *You haven't changed at all.*

"My turn… draw!" Judai shouted. "And I summon… Elemental Hero Airman, in attack position!"

Out of a shining light emerged a heroic winged figure, with fan blades embedded in its wings. It thrusted its fists out in a dramatic pose.

**Elemental Hero Airman** — *LV4 Wind Warrior (1800 ATK)*

*A new Elemental Hero… Judai's never used this before,* Tenjouin thought silently. *But I know about it. It will certainly aid in his strategy.*

"Elemental Hero Airman's effect activates!" Judai went on. "When it's summoned, I can select a 'Hero' card from my deck and add it to my hand."

He fanned his deck out. "I select Elemental Hero Featherman," he said. "And now, I play the magic card 'Fusion'!"

Tenjouin nodded. *As expected, his luck is as exceptional as ever.*

"I fuse Elemental Hero Featherman and Burstlady from my hand," Judai went on, sliding the

cards into his cemetery slot as their figures swirled into the vortex. “And fusion summon Elemental Hero Flame Wingman in attack mode!”

The monster which both Judai and Tenjouin were familiar with by now flew from the fusion vortex and floated downward, staring at Tenjouin sternly.

**Elemental Hero Flame Wingman** — *LV6 Wind Warrior (2100 ATK)*

“Two strong monsters on your first turn,” Tenjouin finally commented aloud. “I see that the goddess of luck still favors you.”

“Now, now, Asuka… you don’t have to talk like that!” Judai said with a wink. “It doesn’t befit someone in your position!”

“Hmph!” Tenjouin said in a playfully mocking tone. “I’ll have you calling me Tenjouin-sensei before this match is done!”

“My turn isn’t over yet, Asuka! I activate the field magic — ‘Skyscraper 2 — Hero City’!”

The lighthouse and harbor around them disappeared, replaced with a futuristic landscape that looked to be out of a science fiction novel. *I know this card, too,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *One of*

*Maeda-san's designs… perhaps Judai-kun* has *changed, just a bit.*

Judai rubbed his nose and chuckled. "Turn end!"

"Judai-kun," Tenjouin remarked. "I'm glad we were able to meet again, but I can't help but feel a bit disappointed. That fire that you showed against Toragami-san… I'm not feeling it now."

"What?" Judai was visibly confused.

"Perhaps our friendship is not as meaningful to you as it was to me?" Tenjouin asked with a heavy exhale.

"Don't be silly!" Judai replied. "I was fighting against Toragami for a reason. This is just a duel between friends! Just because I don't feel that I need to defeat you at all costs, doesn't mean I'm not being serious!"

"Then let me give you some education on what it means to be an adult," Tenjouin said, and removed her glasses, looking at Judai eye to eye. "My turn, draw! You are famous for your mastery of fusion, but just to remind you, I have my own fusion monsters, too. Let me show you! 'Fusion', activate!"

The vortex now appeared on Tenjouin's side of the field.

"Blade Skater and Etoile Cyber, unite! I fusion summon Cyber Blader in attack mode!"

Tenjouin's signature fusion monster appeared on the field.

**Cyber Blader** — *LV7 Earth Warrior (2100 ATK)*

"Awesome monster!" Judai shouted. "It's been awhile since you've shown me that, Asuka!"

"Cyber Blader's monster effect, activate! When my opponent controls two monsters, her attack strength doubles!"

Cyber Blader puffed her chest out and hummed softly as an aura glowed around her.

**Cyber Blader** — *2100 ATK * 2 = 4200 ATK*

Tenjouin mentally surveyed the situation. *If I attacked Airman, I would do more damage. But I'd be ignoring the effect of his field spell, 'Skyscraper 2 — Hero City'. Not only would he be able to revive Airman, he would be able to activate its other effect, allowing it to destroy one of my magic or trap cards. Since I plan on setting 'Meteor Rain' in case he plays defensively next turn, that would be a problem.*

*On the other hand… if I attacked Flame Wingman, because it's a fusion monster, Judai-kun wouldn't be able to revive it. And it would be a more troublesome monster down the line, to be certain. Then that settles it!*

"Cyber Blader! Attack Judai-kun's Elemental Hero Flame Wingman!"

Tenjouin's monster gracefully began to execute her spin. Judai's Flame Wingman could only watch.

Tenjouin pointed with her free hand. "Glissade Slash!"

Flame Wingman roared as Cyber Blader's perfectly executed kick shattered its hologram. Judai reared back and grunted a bit, feeling the stress of the reverberation.

**Judai** — *4000 LP — 2100 = 1900 LP*

"And now that you have one monster, my Cyber Blader's attack returns to normal," Tenjouin went on.

**Cyber Blader** — *4200 ATK / 2 = 2100 ATK*

"I set one card facedown," she said. "Turn end! Judai-kun… show me the duelist I faced at the river!

This may be the last time we see each other. I don't want to have any regrets."

"Now, now, don't talk like it's the end," Judai replied as he drew his card. "After all, you and I have both changed a great deal since then, haven't we?"

Tenjouin shook her head. "It's true I've changed. I have responsibilities now. But you haven't changed at all, Judai-kun. You're ever the whirlwind, raging through people's lives, while remaining yourself unaffected. You'll never understand how you've changed us all!"

Judai paused for a bit. "A… Asuka?"

Tenjouin bit her lip. "Just make your play, you fool!"

"O… okay." Judai put the card he'd drawn into his hand, then took another card. He nodded. "Alright, then. Here goes!

"Elemental Hero Airman!" Judai pointed. "Attack Cyber Blader!"

"What?!" Tenjouin shouted in disbelief.

Airman rose into the air, and then dove down upon Cyber Blader.

“Counterattack!” Tenjouin commanded, and Cyber Blader complied, kicking Airman out of the sky. Judai grunted a bit once again as he felt the pressure.

**Judai** — *1900 LP — 300 = 1600 LP*

“What are you planning?” she demanded.

“Now that my Battle Phase is over, during my Main Phase 2, I summon Elemental Hero Forestman in defense position.”

A creature that looked like it was made from the trunk of a tree appeared and entered a protective stance.

**Elemental Hero Forestman** — *LV4 Earth Warrior (2000 DEF)*

*Another new Elemental Hero for Judai-kun*, Tenjouin mused. *If I leave that monster alive, he’ll fetch a ‘Fusion’ card on his next turn. In that case, I’ll have to destroy it without fail. Still… why did he suicide his Airman?…*

“And now, I activate the effect of ‘Skyscraper 2 — Hero City’!” Judai exclaimed. “Once per turn, I can Special Summon from my cemetery any Elemental Hero that was destroyed in battle.”

Tenjouin's eyes widened. *Of course! I overlooked this possibility!*

Judai pointed his hand again. "Come, Elemental Hero Airman!"

The monster returned to the field and held its arms in defense position.

**Elemental Hero Airman** — *300 DEF*

"But Cyber Blader's attack doubles again!" Tenjouin reminded her opponent.

**Cyber Blader** — *2100 ATK * 2 = 4200 ATK*

Judai nodded, then proceeded. "Now I'll activate Airman's other effect. For every other 'Hero' monster I control, I can destroy one magic or trap card on the field. Asuka, I choose your facedown card!"

Airman got up briefly and blew a gust of wind at Tenjouin's hidden 'Meteor Rain'. *Damn it,* Tenjouin thought to herself quietly as she shielded her body.

"I set one card facedown," Judai said while rubbing his nose and laughing. "Turn end. Do you see that I'm serious now, Asuka? I never joke in a duel. It's the one thing in which I don't know how to fool around."

*One thing's for sure,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *I'm in a bad situation. Not only does my opponent have two monsters with powerful effects, but they can revive themselves. If I destroy either one, Judai-kun will just resurrect them. Not to mention… that facedown.*

She glanced at Judai's hand.

*With only one card in his hand… there's no mistaking what that facedown is. 'A Hero Emerges'. Whether I attack his monsters or not, whatever card he has in his hand will come out one way or another unless I figure out how to get rid of those monsters without attacking them. Surely it is Neos or Edgeman, or something else powerful enough to eliminate Cyber Blader.*

Tenjouin looked at the card she'd drawn, and her hand. *In that case, this is the strategy I'll use.*

"I summon Cold Enchanter to the field in attack position," Tenjouin announced as an icy woman holding a snowflake staff appeared on the field.

**Cold Enchanter** — *LV4 Water Aqua (1600 ATK)*

"I set one card. Turn end."

“No attack? How strange, Asuka,” Judai remarked. “It seems like you’ve read my strategy, haven’t you? But you might regret that! My turn… draw! And now, during my standby phase, the effect of Elemental Hero Forestman activates. I can take a ‘Fusion’ card from my deck or cemetery and add it to my hand.”

His cemetery slot glowed and he retrieved the card.

“Well, you can do what you like,” Tenjouin observed. “But if I’ve read your strategy correctly, you’ll have to either sacrifice your two monsters to get out what you need and risk walking into a trap, or suicide Airman again and take a chance on destroying my facedown before you summon your other monster.”

“That’s just the thing, though, Asuka,” Judai replied with a wide grin. “I knew what you’d be thinking! My facedown card isn’t a trap at all! It’s a magic card… which I’ll now activate! ‘Fake Hero’!”

“W… what?” Tenjouin gasped.

“I can Special Summon a Hero from my hand, but it can’t attack this turn, and returns to my hand during the End Phase. That is, if it’s still there

during the End Phase. But I think you know what I'm choosing to summon, don't you, Asuka?"

Tenjouin frowned deeply. *How could I let myself be so deceived?* she grumbled to herself. *More to the point… how could you deceive me so, Judai?*

A burst of energy came from Judai's duel disk as he threw down his card. "Come out, Elemental Hero Neos!" The familiar sleek white figure showed up on the field.

**Elemental Hero Neos** — *LV7 Light Warrior (2500 ATK)*

**Cyber Blader** — *4200 ATK / 2 = 2100 ATK*

"Next, I'll switch Airman to attack mode," Judai went on. "And for my normal summon, I bring forth Neo-Spacian Air Hummingbird!"

The red winged beast showed up on the field beside Neos.

**Neo-Spacian Air Hummingbird** — *LV3 Wind Bird (800 ATK)*

"Contact fusion! Neo-Spacian Air Hummingbird, Elemental Hero Neos, combine!"

The two creatures floated onto a point in space and a bright light emerged.

Judai thrust his fist in the air triumphantly. “Now appear, Air Neos!”

A winged warrior dressed in red floated down, baring its claws.

**Elemental Hero Air Neos** — *LV7 Wind Warrior (2500 ATK)*

“And now Elemental Hero Air Neos’ monster effect activates,” Judai went on.

“I don’t think so, Judai-kun,” Tenjouin interrupted with a click of her tongue. “I count three monsters on your field — Air Neos, Airman and Forestman. So Cyber Blader gets a new effect — all your magic, trap and monster effects are negated! So Air Neos’ attack power is staying right where it is!”

Judai blinked, realizing his error. But it was salvageable. “At 2500, that’s enough to take out your Cyber Blader anyway! Go… Air Neos! Skyrip Wing!”

As Air Neos arose to make its attack, Tenjouin nodded quietly.

“Reverse card open!” she shouted. “‘Blizzard Curtain’, activate! When your monster attacks mine, I can switch the attack target to defense!” Cyber Blader took a protective stance, and shouted quickly as Air Neos struck her, destroying her hologram.

“And since your monster destroyed the target, it receives an Ice Counter,” Tenjouin went on, as a mist of ice crystallized around Air Neos. “And Cold Enchanter powers up by 300 points for each Ice Counter on the field!”

**Cold Enchanter** — *1600 ATK + 300 = 1900 ATK*

“This is a wholly new strategy for you, Asuka!” Judai said. “I’m impressed!”

“Thank you,” Tenjouin said. “But now, what will you do with your Airman?”

“Airman… attack Cold Enchanter!” Judai ordered.

Tenjouin nodded quietly as Airman suicide bombed Cold Enchanter, who struck him away with her ice staff.

**Judai** — *1600 LP — 100 = 1500 LP*

“And during my Main Phase 2, I’ll summon Airman to the field again,” Judai declared as Airman reappeared in defensive posture. “And activate his effect. I’ll search my deck for a ‘Hero’ card and add it to my hand. I choose… Elemental Hero Ocean! And now…

“Magic card ‘Fusion’, activate!”

*You’ve learned some new things, I’ll admit, Judai-kun,* Tenjouin said as the vortex appeared once more. *But is your faith really well placed?*

“I fuse Elemental Hero Ocean in my hand, and Forestman on my field, to summon… Elemental Hero The Earth!”

A stark-white robotic-looking figure with blue shoulders and head and a red jewel on its chest floated down, crossing its arms, ready for battle.

**Elemental Hero The Earth** — *LV8 Earth Warrior (2500 ATK)*

“Now my hand’s clear, so I’ll end my turn,” Judai said. “And during my End Phase, Elemental Hero Air Neos returns to my deck. And because of that, your Cold Enchanter loses some strength!”

Air Neos turned into light which shone into Judai's deck.

**Cold Enchanter** — *1900 ATK — 300 = 1600 ATK*

"Judai," Tenjouin muttered as she put her hand to her deck. "You're so free and easy. Why… how can you live this way?"

"Asuka…?" Judai responded.

"Do we even matter to you?" Tenjouin shouted. "You left without even saying goodbye! I cried for you! Did you know that? Do you even care? You just live for the duel, and that's enough for you. Well, I'm jealous, Yuuki Judai! I'm jealous that that's enough for you!"

"Asuka, you really have changed," Judai mused.

Tenjouin gasped as her body bolted upright.

"You say I live for the duel as if you never did," Judai went on. "That's why you went to Duel Academy, isn't it? You loved the excitement of the duel, just like me!"

Tenjouin shook her head. "It's true that the excitement of the duel thrills me, but it wasn't

enough. Why do you think I joined the Society of Light?”

“That wasn’t your fault! Saiou… no, the Light of Ruin brainwashed you!”

Tenjouin shook her head again with closed eyes. “No, that’s what you don’t understand. It might have been true that Manjoume-kun was brainwashed. I don’t know what happened between him and Saiou-san, but I do know that he had absolute faith in himself when I dueled him. And… I wanted that. I wanted to do whatever it took, to have that faith. So I surrendered… willingly.”

“Asuka!” Judai shouted. “That’s not true! Your desire for victory was manipulated… used against you! It blinded your eyes and chilled your heart. You weren’t the Tenjouin Asuka that graduated alongside me.”

“And what about Toragami-san?” Tenjouin replied. “What do you have to say about her? She was able to control that Light. I wasn’t. What does that say about me?”

Judai had no response to this.

“My turn,” Tenjouin said darkly. “Draw!”

She observed her hand again. The card she'd just drawn would help her summon the card in her hand. *Perhaps now Judai will see that I am serious.*

"I activate from my hand, the magic card 'Swing of Fond Memories'!" Tenjouin shouted.

Judai's eyes widened. "That card…"

"I can revive one normal monster from my cemetery. Come out, Blade Skater!" The bald ice skating figure showed up on the field. "And now… I will sacrifice Blade Skater and Cold Enchanter, to summon the unrivaled master of water and ice!"

"You… have that card?" Judai gritted his teeth. "Asuka… what happened to you?"

"I understand the importance of victory now! Like you, I have walked the path of do or die. I've borne the thorns of hell for the sake of my students. And that's why I must take responsibility for all the deeds that Tenjouin Asuka has done! Show yourself now… Blue Ice White Nights Dragon!"

The ice dragon materialized on the field and let out a screeching roar.

**Blue Ice White Nights Dragon** — *LV8 Water Dragon (3000 ATK)*

“Asuka…” Judai said as he gazed up at that dragon. “Is this what it’s about for you? Are you trying to forgive yourself for your past?”

“No, I can’t do that,” Tenjouin replied, closing her eyes. “I did terrible things, and was a terrible friend, and I have to live with that. Even if you and everyone else forgave me, I could never forgive myself. I can’t dream of that as a goal anymore, Judai-kun. I can’t regret my past. I have to move on for the future… my own future, and the future of my students!”

“Asuka…”

“It’s like I told you when we fought,” Tenjouin sighed, and now tears were apparent on her face. “You saw the true me that day. I will put everything on the line for victory. Everything… even my warm heart! I’ll walk through hell and back if my victory will protect my important people!”

Her eyes opened suddenly, causing the lingering tears to turn into sparks.

“Blue Ice White Nights Dragon! Destroy Elemental Hero The Earth!”

The ice dragon reared back.

“Freezing Burst Stream!”

The pressure of the attack and its explosive impact shattered Judai’s monster and he actually shouted and fell backward as his life points dropped.

**Judai** — *1500 LP — 500 = 1000 LP*

“I know you’re going to get up from that blow and laugh, and say ‘What an interesting duel’,” Tenjouin said afterward. “I know that’s your truth. But can’t you see how I’m suffering inside? I have to be ready to hurt people in order to protect my charges… even if those people are important to me…

“Even if…”

She flashed back to her deadly battle with Shougo, where she was certain that she had killed him in the battle. That, perhaps without the help of Toragami, Shougo would have never recovered…

“Wake up, sleepyhead!” Judai shouted.

Tenjouin gasped at his familiar words.

“You wanted to show the next generation, didn’t you?” Judai went on. “The infinite possibilities of the duel? Death and destruction… those are

possibilities, too. But you can always recreate what you lost!”

“You don’t understand at all, Judai!” Tenjouin shouted.

“I didn’t believe it, either, Asuka,” Judai said as he reached for his deck. “When we were in the other dimension, and I saw your body disappear before my eyes… I thought I had really lost you, too. And I was certain… no, I knew you were gone forever.”

Tenjouin’s expression softened a bit and her tears stopped.

“But you came back. Like Fubuki-san, and Manjoume, and Kenzan… even after all I’d done. Don’t you think I understand? After I lost you… I gave up my soul. I went for power at all costs. Anything to cover up the pain I felt.”

“Judai-kun… that’s not the same thing at all,” Tenjouin sputtered. “You did what you did because you thought you’d lost Johan. I did what I did because I lost a game. A game!”

“You’re distracted, Asuka,” Judai said as he drew his card. “Before you wake up to the truth, I can’t call you Tenjouin-sensei.” He looked at the solitary card in his hand.

“I summon Winged Kuriboh in defense!”

**Winged Kuriboh** — *LV1 Light Angel (200 DEF)*

“Turn end.”

“We both have no hands,” Tenjouin mused. “It’s like a fresh start for us with this next turn, isn’t it?”

“You said it,” Judai replied with a laugh.

Tenjouin felt her heart lighten a bit. Then she tensed up again. *This is a duel*, she thought to herself. *I’m here to win, right?*

“Draw!” she shouted.

She glanced at the card. “I activate the field magic ‘Absolute Ice Wall’,” she announced. “Destroying your Skyscraper 2 field.”

The futuristic city around them shattered, and the scenery reverted to the harbor, but now a cold wind blew through the air, and ice pillars surrounded Tenjouin’s field.

“Blue Ice White Nights Dragon!” Tenjouin shouted. “Destroy Winged Kuriboh!”

As she declared her attack, she thought back to her years as a student in Duel Academy, having been

a student with Judai. She'd seen how many times he placed his trust in that card. One thing couldn't be denied — he believed that card was his ace. And that effect certainly protected him in many a duel.

Tenjouin felt a certain sense of sadness as her Dragon's attack shattered Winged Kuriboh. *Even the smallest of creatures can make a strong, meaningful sacrifice*' she sighed in her heart. *But those tend to be the ones we miss the most, when they're gone…*

"Winged Kuriboh!" Judai shouted reflexively.

"Turn end," Tenjouin said.

"Well," Judai said. "It all comes down to this, doesn't it? If I don't draw something good here, you'll win for sure."

Tenjouin didn't look happy at all, though.

"What's the matter, Asuka?" Judai asked before drawing his card. "You want to defeat me… don't you?"

"Not like this, Judai," Tenjouin said plaintively. "Not when this might be the last time we see each other. When I could think of you as a rival, it was with the idea that we'd duel again and again. That there wouldn't be a limit to how strong we became.

But… you surpassed me, and left me alone. I could never compare to you, even if I win here.”

“Asuka, you want to be a teacher, right?”

“What are you saying?” Tenjouin looked a bit confused. “I *am* a teacher.”

“Teachers can’t teach what they don’t know,” Judai said as he twirled his card in his hand. “You need to learn to surpass the desire for victory, and I suppose I’m here to teach you that. Just like how Toragami came to teach me something.”

“Don’t say unnecessary words,” Tenjouin replied with a dour expression, although something about his words resounded in her heart.

“I activate Elemental Hero Bubbleman’s effect,” Judai declared. “Since I have no other cards in my hand or on my field, I can Special Summon him from my hand.”

The water hero with the technological suit burst onto the field in defense position.

**Elemental Hero Bubbleman** — *LV4 Water Warrior (1200 DEF)*

“And I also activate his other effect, and draw two cards from my deck,” Judai went on. His

expression was a bit more severe now, and he kept eye contact on Tenjouin as he took his cards.

*The atmosphere is more serious now,* Tenjouin said, and suddenly a calm feeling swept over her. *I'm going to lose, aren't I…*

"Pay attention, Tenjouin-sensei!" Judai shouted.

Tenjouin was startled to attention when Judai addressed her as a teacher.

"I'm using my whole heart to defeat you here," he went on. "Don't think this isn't as difficult for me as it is for you! I activate the magic card 'Raise Dead'! I'll summon from my cemetery, Elemental Hero Airman!"

**Elemental Hero Airman** — *1800 ATK*

"And use its effect to retrieve an Elemental Hero from my deck," Judai went on. "And I select… Elemental Hero Neos!"

*That's right,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *He returned it to his deck with that Contact Fusion… And since he hasn't used his normal summon…*

"And now I sacrifice Elemental Hero Bubbleman and Elemental Hero Airman to summon him!" Judai

shouted, his face becoming sterner by the moment. “Come, Elemental Hero Neos!”

The by-now familiar symbol of Judai’s deck took his place in battle.

**Elemental Hero Neos** — *2500 ATK*

“And now, from my hand, I activate… ‘Hope of Fifth’!” Judai announced. “I select five Elemental Heroes in my grave, and return them to my deck. Then I draw two cards. I choose Elemental Heroes… Bubbleman, Airman, Featherman, Burstlady and Forestman!”

The cards slid out of his cemetery slot and he combined them with his deck, shuffled then drew.

Tenjouin’s expression was quickly sliding into resignation. *Judai, you bet your all on your future, don’t you?* she thought to herself. *That’s where your power comes from… faith. You know that everything will work out for the best, right?*

*Perhaps I can teach that to Shougo-kun and Toragami-san… but first, I must learn the lesson myself. Is that what you want to tell me?*

“Alright!” Judai said, looking at his hand with satisfaction. “‘Contact Soul’, activate! When I

control an Elemental Hero Neos, I can bring out a Neo-Spacian from my Deck. In exchange, all monsters I control return to my deck during the End Phase."

"But there's not going to be an End Phase, is there?" Tenjouin said with a sad smile on her lips.

"Asuka… are you giving up?" Judai asked.

"It's your turn," Tenjouin replied. "It's your chance to shine. I'll have my own chances in the future, but right now, I just want to see your shine. Victory was never really what I pursued."

"Then what was it you pursued?"

Tenjouin just smiled now with confidence, reassured in herself. She spread her arms out wide. "A bright future for everybody," she replied. "That's what I want now. A future full of possibility and adventure… where no one is left out, where everyone has their own chances to shine brilliantly… that's what I want! That's what I'll pursue, and that's what I hope to teach to my students!"

"That's the spirit!" Judai shouted. "You've got it now, Tenjouin-sensei! I summon Neo-Spacian Grand Mole!"

Out of the ground burst forth one of Judai's alien monsters.

**Neo-Spacian Grand Mole** — *LV3 Earth Rock (900 ATK)*

"Are you going to return my White Nights Dragon to my hand and attack me with Neos?" Tenjouin mused. "But then both those monsters will return to your deck, and you won't finish me."

"You know what I'm planning though, don't you, Tenjouin-sensei?" Judai chuckled. "You see the cards in my hand. You may not see their fronts, but you see them nonetheless."

*I'm not positive of your plan, you fool,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *You may just be bluffing, like you did before with Fake Hero. But that tension I felt then is gone here. You're not lying to me, Judai. You never were lying. All the tension came from myself.*

"Contact fusion! Elemental Hero Neos! Neo-Spacian Grand Mole! Become… Elemental Hero Grand Neos!"

The two monsters touched in a point in the air and became one — a fusion of Neos and Grand Mole, dressed in brown and holding a drill as an arm.

**Elemental Hero Grand Neos** — *LV7 Earth Warrior (2500 ATK)*

“Elemental Hero Grand Neos’ effect activates… Nebulous Hole!”

It drove its drill into the ground and Tenjouin’s Blue Ice White Nights Dragon shimmered off of the field. Tenjouin picked the card up off her Duel Disk and placed it into her hand. *A gift for me, perhaps?* the thought slipped into her mind.

“Now Grand Neos will attack you directly!” Judai shouted. And Tenjouin raised her hand for showmanship’s sake as Grand Neos struck her with the drill.

**Tenjouin** — *4000 LP — 2500 = 1500 LP*

“Instant magic activate… ‘Contact Out’!” Judai shouted, playing the other card from his hand.

And at that, Tenjouin felt the doubt in her heart die at last.

*I’m indebted to you, Yuuki Judai, once more,* she mused, closing her eyes as Neos and Grand Mole leapt back onto the field. *But this isn’t a debt meant to be forgiven or forgotten. This is what it means.. to*

*have a bond. You're wrong, Toragami-san. Bonds aren't suffering at all. I will show you.*

She awaited the final attack of the duel with calm and serenity.

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"Well, my business on this island is done," Judai said as he hopped into his boat. "There are other people who hear spirits, and I have to find them. You understand my responsibility, so… let's not make this more difficult than it has to be. See ya, Tenjouin-sensei!"

Tenjouin tried to be strong and keep a stiff upper lip, but just before Judai started his motor, she couldn't take it anymore.

"Judai-kun!"

Judai paused, turning around.

"Don't make this goodbye between us," Tenjouin said. "Please come back someday!"

"I can't promise that, Tenjouin-sensei," Judai replied with a heavy sigh. "But, just know that I'll never forget our duels. Every move of our fights is sealed in my heart. I know it's the same for you."

“Yes,” Tenjouin said simply.

Judai was about to pull the string on his motor when he paused. “And, Asuka?”

“Hm?” Tenjouin was startled by Judai referring to her by her given name by now.

Judai closed his right eye and pointed his index and middle fingers at her.

“Gotcha! That was a fun duel.”

Tenjouin laughed despite the severity of the situation. She took off her glasses and smiled. “Goodbye, Judai-kun,” she said. “Have a safe trip.”

Judai nodded with a smile and finally started the motor, and headed off.

Tenjouin replaced her glasses and watched Judai leave quietly.

“Life is just a series of hellos and goodbyes,” a voice from behind her said. Tenjouin recognized it.

“Toragami-san.”

“You understand the truth now… don’t you?”

Tenjouin rubbed her shoulder. “I lost, Toragami-san,” she said. “Doesn’t that disprove your belief

about me? I'm not a stronger spirit than him after all."

"The world supports him because of his belief, but that is only half of the equation," Toragami said. "He does not understand life beyond himself, but you do. A loss does not change that."

Tenjouin turned to watch Judai's boat get farther and farther away. "You don't yet understand, Toragami-san. The memories Judai and I share… those never go away. And even if his role in my life is over, those memories will remain forever… certainly."

"You're right, Tenjouin-sama," Toragami replied, watching Judai leave as well. "I don't understand."

Tenjouin just chuckled. "You're young. You will."

Toragami remained silent, just sharing the vision of her teacher as they watched a legend depart… together.

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Blue Ice White Nights Dragon"***
Effect monster, a water dragon with 3000 attack and

2500 defense, it is the unrivaled master of water and ice. When magic and trap cards target it, its power negates it. And you can send one face-up magic or trap card to the cemetery when your opponent attacks another monster to force it to attack this one. It is the symbol of the virtue of victory.

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***Shougo:*** *"A legend like that was here and nobody told me?"*
***Aino:*** *"Aoyama-kun is visibly upset as he comes to and Ayukawa-sensei tells him he cannot participate in the tournament."*
***Shougo:*** *"That's my decision to make… isn't it?"*
***Aino:*** *"In the meantime, two duelists with an interest in Toragami-sama squabble over who gets the rights to duel her, and decide to settle it with an all-or-nothing duel between themselves."*
***Shougo:*** *"Umm… people?"*
***Katsuki:*** *"One of them uses Harpies and never heard of Kujaku Mai, and the other uses Cloudians? This is a joke!"*
***Aino:*** *"However, when the Cloudian duelist reveals her ace, the whole island will be shocked…"*
***Shougo:*** "Moshi moshi*?!"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero:***

***'Storm in the Clouds! The Battle Tactics of the Lovesick Duelists'**. Please enjoy."*
***Shougo:** "Don't treat me like I'm not here! I have a role in this story too!"*

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## *SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION*

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### CARDS USED BY JUDAI YUUKI

**ELEMENTAL HERO AIRMAN** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Stratos)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Warrior, 1800/300)*
When this card is Normal or Special Summoned, you can select and activate one of these two effects:
* Destroy Magic or Trap Cards on the field equal to the number of "HERO" monsters you control other than "Elemental Hero Airman".
* Select 1 "HERO" monster in your deck and add it to your hand.

**ELEMENTAL HERO FEATHERMAN** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Avian)*
*Normal Monster (LV3 Wind Warrior, 1000/1000)*
*An Elemental Hero which wings through the sky and*

*manipulates the wind. He judges evil with a single blow from the sky — Feather Break.*

**FUSION** *(TCG name: Polymerization)*
*Normal Magic*
Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion Monster card from your hand or side of the field to the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck.

**ELEMENTAL HERO BURSTLADY** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Burstinatrix)*
*Normal Monster (LV3 Fire Warrior, 1200/800)*
*The lone woman and flame manipulator of the Elemental Heros. Her Burstfire burns away evil.*

**ELEMENTAL HERO FLAME WINGMAN**
*Fusion Effect Monster (LV6 Wind Warrior, 2100/1200)*
"Elemental Hero Featherman" + "Elemental Hero Burstlady"
This monster cannot be Special Summoned except by Fusion Summon. When this card destroys a monster by battle and sends it to the Cemetery, inflict damage to your opponent equal to the Attack points of the destroyed monster.

**SKYSCRAPER 2 — HERO CITY**
*Field Magic*

Once per turn, during your Main Phase, you can Special Summon 1 “Elemental Hero” from your Cemetery that was destroyed by battle. Only this card’s controller can use this effect.

**ELEMENTAL HERO FORESTMAN** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Woodsman)*
*LV4 Earth Warrior (1000/2000)*
Once per turn, during your Standby Phase, you can add 1 “Fusion” from your Deck or Cemetery to your hand.

**FAKE HERO**
*Normal Magic*
Special Summon 1 “Elemental Hero” monster from your hand. This turn, that monster cannot attack, and returns to its owner’s hand during the End Phase.

**ELEMENTAL HERO NEOS**
*Normal Monster (LV7 Light Warrior, 2500/2000)*
*A new Elemental Hero has arrived from Neo Space! When he initiates a Contact Fusion with a Neo-Spacian his unknown powers are unleashed.*

**NEO-SPACIAN AIR HUMMINGBIRD**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Wind Bird, 800/600)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, you can gain 500 Life Points for each card in your opponent’s hand.

**ELEMENTAL HERO AIR NEOS**

*Fusion Effect Monster (LV7 Wind Warrior, 2500/2000)*

"Elemental Hero Neos" + 'Neo-Spacian Air Hummingbird'

This card can only be Special Summoned from your Fusion Deck by returning the above cards you control to the Deck. (You do not use "Fusion".) While your Life Points are lower than your opponent's, this card gains Attack points equal to the difference. This card returns to the Fusion Deck during the End Phase.

**ELEMENTAL HERO OCEAN**

*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Warrior, 1500/1200)*

Once per turn, during your Standby Phase, you can return 1 "HERO" monster from your side of the field or your Cemetery to its owner's hand.

**ELEMENTAL HERO THE EARTH** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Terra Firma)*

*Fusion Effect Monster (LV8 Earth Warrior, 2500/2000)*

"Elemental Hero Ocean" + 'Elemental Hero Forestman'

This monster cannot be Special Summoned except by Fusion Summon. You can Sacrifice 1 face-up "Elemental Hero" monster to have this card gain

Attack points equal to the Sacrificed card's Attack points until the End Phase.

**WINGED KURIBOH**
*Effect Monster (LV1 Light Angel, 300/200)*
When this card on the field is destroyed and sent to the cemetery, all Battle Damage to this card's controller becomes 0 for that turn.

**ELEMENTAL HERO BUBBLEMAN**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Warrior, 800/1200)*
If this is the only card in your hand, you can Special Summon it. If you have no other cards on your field when this card is Summoned, you can draw 2 cards.

**RAISE DEAD** *(TCG name: Monster Reborn)*
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Monster in either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

**HOPE OF FIFTH** *(TCG name: Fifth Hope)*
*Normal Magic*
Select 5 "Elemental Hero" monsters in your Cemetery and shuffle them into the Deck. Then draw 2 cards. Draw 3 cards if you had no other cards on the field and in your hand when you activated this card.

**CONTACT SOUL** *(note: anime exclusive card.)*
*Normal Magic*
Activate only while you control a face up "Elemental Hero Neos". Special Summon 1 "Neo-Spacian" Monster from your Deck or Cemetery. During the End Phase, return all monsters you control to their owner's decks.

**NEO-SPACIAN GRAND MOLE**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Earth Rock, 900/300)*
If this card battles with an opponent's monster, you can skip damage calculation to return both monsters to their owner's hands at the start of the Damage Step.

**ELEMENTAL HERO GRAND NEOS**
*Fusion Effect Monster (LV7 Earth Warrior, 2500/2000)*
"Elemental Hero Neos" + 'Neo-Spacian Grand Mole'
This card can only be Special Summoned from your Fusion Deck by returning the above cards you control to the Deck. (You do not use "Fusion".) Once per turn, you can return 1 monster your opponent controls to its owner's hand. This card returns to the Fusion Deck during the End Phase.

**CONTACT OUT**
*Instant Magic*
Return 1 “Neos” Fusion Monster you control to the Fusion Deck. If all the Fusion Material Monsters listed on that Fusion Monster are in your deck, you can Special Summon them.

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**CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN**

**FUSION** *(TCG name: Polymerization)*
Normal Magic
Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion Monster card from your hand or side of the field to the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck.

**ETOILE CYBER**
*Effect Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1200/1600)*
If this card attacks your opponent directly, its ATK goes up by 500 points during the Damage Step.

**BLADE SKATER**
*Normal Monster (L4 Earth Warrior, 1400/1500)*
*An image of beauty on the ice, this gorgeous warrior rips her opponents to pieces with her stylish Accel Slicer attack.*

**CYBER BLADER**
*Fusion Effect Monster (L7 Earth Warrior, 2100/800)*
"Etoile Cyber" + "Blade Skater"
A Fusion Summon of this Monster can only be conducted with the above Fusion-Material Monsters. This card gains the following effects according to the number of monsters your opponent controls:
1 — This monster cannot be destroyed as a result of battle.
2 — This monster's Attack points are doubled.
3 — Negate the effects of your opponent's Magic, Trap and Monster Cards.

**METEOR RAIN** *(TCG name: Meteorain)*
*Normal Trap*
Your monsters inflict piercing damage for the turn this card is activated.

**COLD ENCHANTER**
*Effect Monster (L4 Water Aqua, 1600/1200)*
You can discard 1 card to place an Ice Counter on 1 face-up monster. This card gains 300 ATK for each Ice Counter on the field.

**BLIZZARD CURTAIN** *(note: manga exclusive card. Its English name is "Blizzard Wall")*
*Normal Trap*
Change the battle position of 1 monster that was

declared as an attack target. If that monster is destroyed by battle, place 1 Ice Counter on the monster that attacked it.

**SWING OF FOND MEMORIES** *(TCG name: Swing of Memories)*
*Normal Magic*
Special Summon 1 Normal Monster from your cemetery. It is destroyed during the End Phase of this turn.

**BLUE ICE WHITE NIGHTS DRAGON** *(TCG name: White Night Dragon)*
*Effect Monster (L8 Water Dragon, 3000/2500)*
Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card that targets this card and destroy it. When a face-up Monster you control is selected as an attack target, by sending one face-up Magic or Trap card you control to the cemetery, change the attack target to this card.

**ABSOLUTE ICE WALL** *(note: manga exclusive card. Its English name is "Absolute Zero Barrier")*
*Field Magic*
Monsters with Ice Counters lose 500 Attack points for each Ice Counter on them and cannot declare an attack.

# 28. Battle Tactics of the Lovesick Duelists

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*The non-original characters in this fanfiction are copyrighted to Kazuki Takahashi, Studio Gallup and Toei where applicable. All other characters are considered public domain by the author and may be used freely, but he does request that you ask permission as a courtesy.*

*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (vm_). Thank you very much for reading.*

*Special thanks to AxelDH and Jaymie-chan for inspiring the characters of Heilos Tai and Kagome Mizuno, respectively. They also helped with writing the story and planning the duel, so proper respects should go to them as well.*

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Mark Walker was staring down his opponent, an Obelisk Blue named Rokuro Tanuma. Like most of

the other Obelisks in the school, Tanuma had an attitude towards Mark, not only because he was Ra, but because he was American.

**Mark** — *200 LP*
**Tanuma** — *400 LP*

Despite Tanuma's attitude, they had been going blow for blow. With no monsters available to him on the field last turn, Mark had set a monster and one card to add to his two hidden cards and ended. Tanuma had just played "Tempest", wrecking Mark's backrow, leaving only his set monster to defend himself.

"I'm willing to bet that monster's just a small fry!" Tanuma shouted with a laugh. "So I'm going to end this match now! I summon Spear Dragon in attack mode!"

A blue dragon with a long, sharp nose appeared on the field.

**Spear Dragon** — *LV4 Wind Dragon (1900 ATK)*

"You see, when Spear Dragon attacks a defense position monster, you still take damage! Whatever you got there ain't no match for this beast! Face it, *gaikokujin*… you can't defeat me!"

Mark said nothing.

“Spear Dragon, attack!” Tanuma ordered. “Spear Flash!”

The dragon struck the facedown card with its nose, but was then surprised when the card flipped face-up to reveal an Atlantean warrior bearing a gigantic shield. It threw off Spear Dragon, who shouted in apparent pain.

**Defender of Atlantis** — *LV4 Water Warrior (2400 DEF)*

“What?!” Tanuma shouted.

“Sorry, man,” Mark apologized, trying very hard to sound sincere. “My facedown monster was ‘Defender of Atlantis’. Its defense points are 2400… 500 higher than your dragon. That means you’re the loser in this match, and all your Star points are mine!”

**Tanuma** — *400 LP — 500 = 0 LP*

“How could I lose to an American clown?” Tanuma shouted as his Star points went from 3 to zero. “2400 defense points?! That card isn’t fair! You must be cheating!”

“Well, it does have a negative effect,” Mark said as he picked up the card and looked at it and his Star points went up to 7. “But, you know, you did take a chance on attacking it. And there are cards with higher defense points, like ‘Big Shield Ga’—”

“Shut up, I know!” Tanuma grumbled and walked away, without another word. He didn’t need to be reminded any more that he was to blame for his own loss.

“I’ve never seen you use *that* card before,” a female voice said from a distance. “Could it be you’ve made a new deck again for the Genex tournament?”

Mark turned to see Isabel smiling at him. She’d been watching him duel. Mark blushed slightly and averted his eyes. “Well, I needed an ace in the hole, you know? After all, I am a duelist and…”

“No worries, kid,” Isabel replied in English. “I see you have seven points, that’s pretty good. I actually already have ten, so I’m done for the day.”

“No way!” Mark gasped, impressed. “That means you’re the first duelist to get into the finals! And I heard you were using your Ignis deck, too. That’s pretty impressive. Some of these guys are tough!”

“It’s no major advantage,” Isabel said, and tapped her lower chest a bit. “I’m exhausted, though. Dueling takes a lot out of a girl.”

“Actually, I’m kinda tired too,” Mark said. “I think I’ll take a break, scope out the competition.”

“That’s a good ide…” Isabel began, and then paused as she noticed something. “Who’s that guy in the green?”

Mark noticed him too, earlier, hanging around. An eccentric looking young man who wore a modified Ra Yellow uniform, colored green. He wore a neck handkerchief and carried himself with an aloof air. He caught the attention of others as he stood, apparently, waiting.

*Mizuno Kagome…* he thought to himself. *You better have fulfilled your end of our bargain!*

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 28: “Storm in the Clouds! The Battle Tactics of the Lovesick Duelists”***

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Shougo wandered in the darkness, where he was safe and knew the way around… but something was calling for him. A strange light…

No, an eye light…

“Aoyama-kun?”

Shougo winced as he was awakened from his dream. “Wha… wha… Ayukawa-sensei?”

When Shougo fully regained consciousness, he realized what had happened. He’d collapsed watching Chiba’s duel, although he wasn’t sure why. He just felt everything swimming away from him and he couldn’t stay awake anymore.

Now, he was back in a hospital bed in the medical office, but his situation looked much more severe. An IV needle stuck out of his left arm, and he had oxygen coming in through a tube in his nose. While it was nothing majorly intrusive, he could clearly see that his body was not in good shape.

“You’re finally up, Aoyama-kun,” Ayukawa said, looking up from a chart. “How are you feeling?”

“Lousy, I guess,” Shougo replied wearily. “Did Tenjouin-sensei bring me here?”

“Her and Chiba-kun,” Ayukawa replied. “But don’t worry about them. Aoyama-kun, the results just came back from your bloodwork, and this is hard for me to say, but… it’s serious.”

Shougo narrowed his eyes. “Tell me honestly, sensei,” he said. “What’s wrong?”

“I don’t want to tell you technical terms that you don’t understand,” Ayukawa replied. “When I let you go, your lab work was a little bit worrisome, but it was nothing to be too concerned about. However, when you came in, your body had no color, so I had to take some blood to be sure.”

She then raised papers on a chart she held in her hand. “Your blood urea nitrogen test came back far high above the levels they were when I let you go. I can’t explain why they weren’t this high before, but that doesn’t matter.”

“Blood urea nitrogen?” Shougo asked quietly. This sounded *very* serious.

“Aoyama-kun… your kidneys are breaking down,” Ayukawa said in a soft voice.

“What?!” Shougo shouted. “Tha-that’s impossible!” He felt a surge of panic from inside.

“Shougo-kun… I cannot allow you to participate in the Genex tournament,” Ayukawa said, sitting in a chair beside him. “I know it meant a lot to you, or you wouldn’t have come to this school. But I can’t in good conscience let you go now.”

Shougo clenched his fists. “B… but Chiba-kun… I… Toragami-san…” He began to weep. “Is… is this my fault, Ayukawa-sensei? Did I…?”

“This didn’t happen because of you, Shougo-kun!” Ayukawa shouted, then her voice softened. “Please don’t blame yourself. You are not well and I need to do my best to get you well, so you can duel again. You do your best, and rest and recover.”

“And follow your directions, right?” Shougo sighed, looking towards his nightstand where his deck lay.

“If something I say feels wrong to you, please tell me,” Ayukawa said, getting up. “Your well being is an important part of finding out the cure to your disease, too. I wouldn’t ignore that at any time. Please, Shougo-kun… get some rest. We’ll discuss what to do with your Star point later.”

*But you’re not letting me enter the tournament,* Shougo thought to himself, but just nodded in

assent. Ayukawa left the room, turning out the light behind her. Shougo was only comforted by the faint sounds of the medical equipment in the room.

---

"So… who is that green guy?" Isabel pressed on.

"That's Heilos Tai," Mark said. "I don't know much about him. I've seen him duel, though, and he's pretty strong. He runs a Harpie Lady deck, it appears."

"So… a Kujaku Mai fan, eh?" Isabel pondered aloud.

Heilos heard this comment and appeared to take umbrage.

"People keep talking about this 'Kujaku Mai'," he said. "Don't they know I'm an original?! And don't call me 'that green guy'! I'm the free flying spirit of the sky, Heilos Tai-sama! Don't you forget it!"

Mark and Isabel were visibly nonplussed.

"*Sama*… that's…?" Mark asked.

"That's right," Isabel replied, and sighed sadly.

“Anyway, if you see an Obelisk girl with glasses, tell her she needs to hurry up and get her four stars,” Heilos went on.

“‘An Obelisk girl with glasses’?” Isabel asked. “That narrows it down.”

“Trust me,” Heilos said. “This girl has *glasses*.”

“Are you talking about somebody?” a female voice in the distance called. And Mark and Isabel turned to see who they assumed was who Heilos was speaking of — an Obelisk girl with a ponytail weave in her oddly colored hair — it was slate blue, but it did not appear to be a dye job. Her eyes were equally jarring — even at this distance, they could be seen to be a dark pink color.

“You! Kagome!” Heilos shouted, addressing the girl with uncommon familiarity.

“For the last time,” the girl replied in a deadly calm voice. “You will address me properly.”

She then exploded into a sudden rage. “It’s Mizuno-sama! I’m Mizuno Kagome, and you’ll give me the respect I deserve, you gadabout!”

“…*dezuki*?” Mark repeated the word Mizuno used to mean “gadabout” in an unfamiliar tone. He

was watching the scenario with a bemused detachment, but now his confusion got the better of him.

“It means ‘gadabout’,” Isabel told her friend in English, knowing he’d understand.

“‘Gadabout’?!” Heilos harrumphed. “Why, I am offended, offended to the core, that you would denigrate my affections for Toragami-sama by using such trite euphemisms to refer to me, Kagome-kun!”

“Mizuno-sama…” Kagome muttered, eyebrow twitching. “Refer to me properly, green-kun! I’ve obtained the four star points as per our agreement! Now let’s settle things as duelists… or are you going to stray from your affections out of fear of losing the tournament?”

Mark was obviously lost now. “What’s… going on?”

“If you paid more attention in remedial Japanese class, you might understand, *maruku-inu*!” the ingratiating voice of Katsuki sounded from behind Mark.

Katsuki, Aino and Toragami were all standing not too far off from Mark and Isabel.

“Heilos Tai and Mizuno Kagome,” Aino observed. “They both have a wish to duel Toragami-sama in this tournament. But because of their affections, they also have a conflict over who will get to duel her. So they agreed to gather four Star points each, then duel one another in an all-or-nothing duel for the right to face Toragami-sama.”

“Of course, I never agreed to duel the winner,” Toragami said quietly. “But I do have nine Star points. So perhaps it would be an interesting diversion.”

“And what about you two?” Isabel asked Aino and Katsuki.

“Well, I have seven, but I’ve been selective as to who I face,” Aino said. “As for Katsuki-san…”

Katsuki glared at her friend.

“Don’t ask,” Aino said with a sigh. “And you?”

“I’ve already got the ten I need, so I’m done for the day,” Isabel said. “And Mark has seven.”

Mark noted Katsuki’s deep frown. *More than she has, no doubt*, he thought to himself.

“What about Aoyama Shougo?” Toragami asked. “Do you know anything about him?”

“We actually haven’t really heard from him,” Isabel admitted. “He might have decided not to enter.”

“No,” Toragami said and closed her eyes. “Someone like him would definitely enter this tournament.”

Katsuki opened her mouth, but Aino nudged her to be quiet, so she kept her opinion to herself.

“In any case, Isabel and I are taking a break,” Mark said. “So we’re gonna kick back and watch this duel.”

“Us too,” Aino said. “The ones with few Star points are busy dueling each other. There’s no reason for us to waste too much energy.”

Katsuki glared at Mark. *If I wasn’t exhausted from my last duel, I’d play you right now,* she thought to herself. *But no need to rush things. I’ll get my pride back in due time!*

“I assume you’re waiting here because you got the four stars,” Mizuno said. “Someone like you wouldn’t actively seek out his opponent, am I right, Green-kun? You wanted me to waste my time and energy looking for you?”

“Flowers are meant to take root in the earth and blossom!” Heilos replied, spreading his hands out. “You are just a mere tumbleweed!”

“But tumbleweeds spread their seeds over the earth,” Mizuno said with a smirk, adjusting her glasses. “If you paid any attention in science class, you’d know that.” One of her lenses caught the light of the setting sun.

“W-we’re wasting time!” Heilos shouted, suddenly upset. “Do you have your four star points or not?”

“Of course,” Mizuno said with a sinister-seeming smile. “Do you?”

“Of course!”

“Then what are we waiting for?!”

The two raised their Duel Disks and activated them, the girl raising her Disk against her chest. The duel was about to begin, and waited on just one word spoken by the two of them at once.

“Duel!”

**Heilos** — *4000 LP*
**Mizuno** — *4000 LP*

“‘Dice Roll’,” the Duel Disks droned, and once again the holographic dice appeared on the field. Mizuno rolled a 6, while Heilos rolled 3.

“Well, we can clearly see who the gods favor, eh, Green-kun?” Mizuno scoffed.

“Don’t call me that, you Kagome!” Heilos shouted.

“I’ll ignore that for now,” Mizuno replied. “My turn… draw! Continuous magic ‘Summon Cloud’, activate!”

The image of a light shining through clouds appeared on the magic card.

“Each turn, once during my own Main Phase, if I control no monsters, I can take a Level 4 ‘Cloudian’ monster in my hand or in either of our cemeteries and Special Summon it to the field!” Mizuno declared.

“So, ‘Mizuno’-kun runs water attribute Cloudians,” Katsuki said lazily. “Why am I not surprised…”

Mizuno’s eyebrow twitched. “That’s Mizuno-SAMA to you, you dirt clod!” she shouted. “I don’t

care if you know Toragami-sama or not, you'll address me respectfully!"

"And who the hell do you think you're talking to, water girl?" Katsuki shouted back in kind. "I'm not just any random person! The Katsuki family have helped the Toragami family for generations!"

"Like I care about any of that!" Mizuno shouted and returned to her game, turning her head disdainfully.

"A Cloudian deck would flood the field with indestructible monsters," Isabel observed. "Their ace monster, 'Eye of the Typhoon', is very powerful. But without some kind of support card, it's difficult."

"Yes," Mark nodded. "Most Cloudians have to stay in attack mode, or they're automatically destroyed."

"Most, but not all," Mizuno said, picking Mark's line out of the few among the gathered crowd. "'Summon Cloud' effect, activate. Since I control no monsters, I'll special summon one from my hand. 'Cloudian — Smoke Ball' in defense position!"

A small wisp of a cloud, with big baby eyes and a tiny mouth, appeared on the field, cooing in a cute

fashion.

**Cloudian — Smoke Ball** — *LV1 Water Angel (600 DEF)*

“A Normal Monster?” Mark remarked. “True… it’s not like other Cloudians, but that’s pretty weak.”

“Fool,” Toragami said in a deadpan voice.

“What?!” Mark shouted, indignant.

“This duel is about more than simply the battle,” Toragami went on. “Even someone like you can feel the tension in the atmosphere.”

“Come to mention it, I do feel strange,” Mark said, uncertain. “But… you know, I figured since I’ve been dueling three Solid Vision games straight…”

“Do not doubt your instincts,” Toragami said. “I know that in America, you are trained to believe your emotions are simply your inner uncertainties, but you should know by now that that’s not the case.”

Mark gasped and his eyes shimmered as he was struck with the realization that Toragami was trying to *help* him. *Ms. Toragami… you really are amazing,* he thought to himself. *It’s true… I feel it, too. So*

*does everyone else gathering around here. There's a storm coming. It's only a matter of time…*

"For my Normal Summon this turn, I summon 'Cloudian — Turbulence' in attack position!" Mizuno went on.

A tornado cloud swirled into the field, and grew arms and a face, chuckling in a sinister fashion.

**Cloudian — Turbulence** — *LV4 Water Angel (800 ATK)*

"When Turbulence is summoned, it gains 1 'Fog Counter' for each Cloudian on the field, including itself," Mizuno said. "So that makes a total of 2."

Turbulence swirled energy from the field into itself, pulling a bit of the water vapor from the Smoke Ball, who didn't seem to mind or even notice.

"What do you think you'll gain from summoning that whisp of a cloud?" Heilos laughed. "In attack position? Give me a break."

"I wouldn't expect someone who can't even understand the color uniform he's supposed to be wearing to understand," Mizuno spat.

“Hey, I just hate yellow, okay?!” Heilos shouted. “Besides, what can you gain by summoning a weak thing like that in attack position?”

“Clouds are meant to float freely through the air,” Mizuno explained. “You try to constrict it, it becomes a mere drop of water, but while it exists as a cloud, it cannot be destroyed! And besides, battle damage is about to become a worry for the heavens, and not for me, because I have a card that will settle that matter.”

“What?” Heilos sounded confused. “You’re not making sense, Kagome.”

“MIZUNO-SAMA!” Mizuno’s vein on her forehead popped out momentarily. “I activate the field magic ‘The Sanctuary in the Sky’!”

A bright light blinded everyone’s field of vision. When the light faded, the onlookers found themselves in the clouds, with an old stone Greek-style statue behind Mizuno.

“Ohh!” Isabel noted, impressed. “This card will certainly help Cloudians.”

“Battle damage to the controller of angel monsters becomes 0 with this card on the field,” Aino noted. “And since Cloudian monsters can’t be

destroyed in battle, that means Mizuno is essentially immune to damage as long as she controls a monster."

"Maybe that Turbulence," Katsuki said. "But that Smoke Ball is something else."

"Turn end," Mizuno said with a laugh.

"Well, then, playtime is over," Heilos replied. "And showtime is about to begin! Draw!"

He checked his hand and laughed. *Those Cloudians are going to be trouble later on,' he thought. 'I'd really like to have 'Harpies' Hunting Ground'. Then I can break that Sanctuary and do some damage. But this will do just fine for now.*

"I summon my elegant maiden flying through the skies, the Harpie Lady!"

A bird woman with magenta colored hair and an upper body that was barely covered appeared on the field, giving a shout as her attack power immediately went up 300 points.

**Harpie Lady 1** — *LV4 Wind Bird (1300 ATK + 300 = 1600 ATK)*

"What the hell?" some people were heard to murmur. 'I thought Harpie Lady was a normal

monster,’ one said, while another said “Geez, what a lame ripoff of Kujaku Mai…”

“Heilos Tai-sama is NOT a ripoff of anyone!” Heilos shouted. “And this is Harpie Lady number one! She gives herself and all others of her attribute 300 attack points! And if you think that’s impressive, prepare yourself… there’s about to be a lot more of her!

“I activate from my hand, two copies of ‘Kaleidoscope — Magnificent Replication’!”

The Harpie Lady spun in place as four images of her started to appear on the field.

“When I control a Harpie Lady, I can use this card to summon either a ‘Harpie Lady’ or a ‘Harpie Lady Sisters’ card from my hand or deck! So, I summon to the field… ‘Harpie Lady Sisters’! ‘Harpie Lady — Cyber Bondage’! Show yourselves now!”

Four other Harpie Ladies appeared, one of them in metallic armor wielding a whip. The ones without armor grouped together on the image of one card. Apparently, they were the Harpie Lady Sisters.

**Harpie Lady — SB** — *LV4 Wind Bird (1800 ATK + 300 = 2100 ATK)*

**Harpie Lady Sisters** — *LV6 Wind Bird (1950 ATK + 300 = 2250 ATK)*

“And of course, because of their Harpie Lady partner, their power goes up,” Heilos explained. The crowd was now duly impressed.

“That’s some powerful monsters in a hurry,” Isabel complimented. “But with that Sanctuary card on the field, it’s meaningless.”

“So, Harpie Lady number one… we might not be able to hurt our opponent, but let’s at least get rid of one of her troublesome cloud things! Attack Smoke Ball with Scratch Clash!”

Mark, Isabel, Katsuki and Aino alike facefaulted. “He says he never heard of Kujaku Mai…” Aino started.

“…but he uses the same attack name as her?” Katsuki finished.

With a swipe of her claw, the Harpie Lady destroyed Mizuno’s Smoke Ball. Mizuno seemed utterly unfazed.

“I’ll let you think about two of my facedown cards as I end my turn,” Heilos said, finally.

“My turn, then?” Mizuno asked in a sardonic way as she drew her card. “I activate the magic card ‘Trade-In’. By discarding a Level 8 monster from my hand, I can draw two more.”

She placed “Cloudian — Eye of the Typhoon” into her cemetery slot and grinned wickedly as she took her cards.

“What… what?!” Aino gasped.

“She just got rid of the Cloudian ace card?” Katsuki said. “Is she insane?”

“Who says that’s my ace?” Mizuno said with a deadly smile as she looked at her drawn card, hearing the comment. “I summon… ‘Elemental Hero Airman’ in attack position.”

The winged hero appeared on the field with a shout.

**Elemental Hero Airman** — *LV4 Wind Warrior (1800 ATK)*

The company was in shock at the direction of the duel. “A Mai-san copycat against a Judai-san copycat?” some were heard to ask.

But unlike Heilos, Mizuno just shrugged it off. “Airman’s effect activates,” she said. “I can take a

‘Hero’ card from my deck and place it in my hand.” She fanned her deck out, and selected one card. She then showed it to Heilos.

“Hey… you have to tell me what card you’re choosing!” Heilos shouted.

“You can read the big giant ‘HERO’ from here, can’t you?” Mizuno said, and then placed the card in her hand. “And now to use Turbulence’s effect!”

The tornado monster started to swirl, and from within its center sprang out two more Smoke Balls.

**Cloudian — Smoke Ball** — *LV1 Water Angel (600 DEF)*
**Cloudian — Smoke Ball** — *LV1 Water Angel (600 DEF)*

“By removing two Fog Counters, I summon two Smoke Balls from my Deck…”

Her glasses then shimmered with a strange light. “And now, for the moment I’ve been waiting for.”

Katsuki cocked an eyebrow. “This duel is progressing quicker than normal,” she said. “Is she that hesitant to show what her ace monster is?”

But among the four of them, Isabel alone seemed to realize what the card was, as a sweat drop was

seen to roll off her forehead.

“What is it, Isabel-san?” Aino said.

“I recognize the card she has,” Isabel said. “From Shougo-san’s duel with Horiuchi…”

There wasn’t much more time for the others to inquire before Mizuno made her intention plain.

“Clouds, beings made of water, now surrender yourselves and become the water of the human body! The heat through which our passion burns brightly! Life itself! I sacrifice the Cloudians Turbulence and my two Smoke Balls now!”

“Three sacrifices?” Mark pondered. “What could it be?”

The tornado and the cloud whisps evaporated to a single point in mid-air, and a rumble shook the surrounding area. Most passed it off as a simple overload of the Solid Vision system, but when the rumble started to increase to the point where it felt like an earthquake, some were concerned.

Thunder was heard in the distance and a figure formed in the air. A black figure with demonic wings, a tail and a dragon arm for a hand, it

descended down, dark angel as it was, like lightning from heaven.

“As I thought…” Isabel whispered. The other students who recognized the card also were in shock and awe at its sight.

“Bring yourself out of slumber now,” Mizuno said, the reverence in her voice chilling. “The beat of my heart itself…

“‘Destiny Hero — Bloo-D’!”

Aino now understood. “Impossible!”

“How can someone like that have that card?!” Katsuki shouted.

But there it was, plain as day to all who witnessed, floating down to the playing field.

**Destiny Hero — Bloo-D** — *LV8 Dark Warrior (1900 ATK)*

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD: *“Destiny Hero Bloo-D”***
Effect monster, a level 8 dark warrior, 1900 attack points and 600 defense points. The Ultimate D-Card,

only five were published as a support to the "Destiny Rewritten" booster pack. It absorbs half the strength of an opponent's monster and negates effects on the field. It stands as the symbol of the tenacity of spirit that humans wield.

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***Mizuno:*** *"How do you like that? The heat of my heart has finally revealed itself to the world!"*
***Aino:*** *"Mizuno-san shocks all of Duel Academy by summoning her ace, a monster only seen when used by Edo Phoenix-san — the Utimate D-Card, Bloo-D."*
***Mizuno:*** *"Mizuno-sama!!"*
***Shougo:*** *"And all of this happening while I'm in this place… how can this be…"*
***Toragami:*** *"Foolish ambitions burn out in an ugly fashion."*
***Mark:*** *"Don't think Heilos-san is out either, though! He may act like an idiot, but he's not stupid!"*
***Heilos:*** *"Hey, hey…"*
***Aino:*** *"The passion that both duelists have hidden within them are now bared for all to see. Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Caged Girl, the Boy in Flight'****. Please enjoy."*
***Heilos:*** *"Don't think the great me is going to lose to*

*someone like this Kagome…"*
***Mizuno:*** *"MIZUNO-SAMA! Call me 'Kagome' again… just one more time!"*

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## *SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION*

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### CARDS USED BY ROKURO TANUMA:

**TEMPEST** *(TCG name: Heavy Storm)*
*Normal Magic*
Destroy all Magic and Trap Cards on the field.

**SPEAR DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Dragon, 1900/0)*
When the Attack points of this monster is higher than the Defense points of a Defense Position monster it destroys, inflict the difference as Battle Damage to your opponent. If this monster attacks, it is changed to Defense Position at the end of the Damage Step.

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### CARDS USED BY MARK WALKER:

**DEFENDER OF ATLANTIS** *( "Negative Zero" original card)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Warrior, 200/2400)*
If this monster is in Defense position, its Defense points are is lowered by 1000 every time it is attacked, until its controller's next Standby Phase. If "Legendary City Atlantis" is on the field, and would be destroyed by a card effect, you may sacrifice this face-up monster to negate that effect and destroy the card.

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**CARDS USED BY KAGOME MIZUNO:**

**SUMMON CLOUD**
*Continuous Magic*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, if you control no monsters, you can Special Summon 1 Level 4 or lower "Cloudian" monster from your hand or from either player's cemetery. If you Special Summon a monster from the cemetery with this effect, destroy this card.

**CLOUDIAN — SMOKE BALL**
*Normal Monster (LV1 Water Angel, 200/600)*
*Smoke Balls are newly born Cloudians. They fear*

*being alone, and would rather swing and sway in the sky with their friends.*

**CLOUDIAN — TURBULENCE**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Angel, 800/0)*
This card is not destroyed as a result of battle. If this card is in face-up Defense Position, destroy it. When this card is Normal Summoned, place 1 "Fog Counter" on it for each face-up 'Cloudian' monster on the field. You can remove 1 "Fog Counter" from this card to Special Summon 1 "Cloudian — Smoke Ball" from your Deck or from either player's cemetery.

**THE SANCTUARY IN THE SKY**
*Field Magic*
Battle Damage to the controller of an Angel-type monster from a battle involving that Angel-type monster becomes 0.

**TRADE-IN**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 Level 8 monster. Draw 2 cards.

**CLOUDIAN — EYE OF THE TYPHOON**
*Effect Monster (LV8 Water Aqua, 3000/1000)*
This card is not destroyed as a result of battle. If this card is in face-up Defense Position, destroy it. When this card declares an attack, change the battle

positions of all face-up monsters, except “Cloudian” monsters.

**ELEMENTAL HERO AIRMAN** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Stratos)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Warrior, 1800/300)*
When this card is Normal or Special Summoned, you can select and activate one of these two effects:
* Destroy Magic or Trap Cards on the field equal to the number of “HERO” monsters you control other than “Elemental Hero Airman”.
* Select 1 “HERO” monster in your deck and add it to your hand.

**DESTINY HERO — BLOO-D** *(TCG name: Destiny Hero — Plasma)*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Dark Warrior, 1900/600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by sacrificing 3 monsters. Once per turn, select a monster your opponent controls and place it under your control as an Equip Card equipped to this card. (Only 1 monster can be equipped at a time.) This card gains Attack points equal to half the Attack points of the equipped monster. While this card is face-up on the field, negate the effects of all face-up Effect Monsters your opponent controls.

**CARDS USED BY HEILOS TAI:**

**HARPIE LADY 1**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Bird, 1300/1400)*
This card's name is treated as "Harpie Lady" at all times. All Wind-attribute monsters gain 300 Attack points.

**KALEIDOSCOPE — MAGNIFICENT REPLICATION** *(TCG name: Elegant Egotist)*
*Normal Magic*
Activate only while you control at least 1 "Harpie Lady". Special Summon 1 'Harpie Lady' or "Harpie Lady Sisters" from your Hand or Deck.

**HARPIE LADY SISTERS**
*Effect Monster (LV6 Wind Bird, 1950/2100)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned by the effect of "Kaleidoscope — Magnificent Replication".

**HARPIE LADY — SB** *(TCG name: Cyber Harpie Lady)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Bird, 1800/1300)*
This card's name is treated as "Harpie Lady".

# 29. The Caged Girl, the Boy in Flight

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*The non-original characters in this fanfiction are copyrighted to Kazuki Takahashi, Studio Gallup and Toei where applicable. All other characters are considered public domain by the author and may be used freely, but he does request that you ask permission as a courtesy.*

*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (vm_). Thank you very much for reading.*

*Special thanks to AxelDH and Jaymie-chan for inspiring the characters of Heilos Tai and Kagome Mizuno, respectively. The latter also planned this duel, so proper dues should be given to her as well.*

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Mizuno's glasses shimmered with a strange light. "And now, for the moment I've been waiting for."

“I recognize the card she has,” Isabel said with a gasp. “The one she fetched with ‘Elemental Hero Airman’… from Shougo-san’s duel with Horiuchi…”

There wasn’t much more time for the others to inquire before Mizuno made her intention plain.

“Clouds, beings made of water, now surrender yourselves and become the water of the human body! The heat through which our passion burns brightly! Life itself! I sacrifice the Cloudians Turbulence and my two Smoke Balls now!”

Thunder was heard in the distance and a figure formed in the air. A black figure with demonic wings, a tail and a dragon arm for a hand, it descended down, dark angel as it was, like lightning from heaven.

“As I thought…” Isabel whispered. The other students who recognized the card also were in shock and awe at its sight.

“Bring yourself out of slumber now,” Mizuno said, the reverence in her voice chilling. “The beat of my heart itself…

“Destiny Hero — Bloo-D!”

Aino now understood. “Impossible!”

“How can someone like that have that card?!” Katsuki shouted.

But there it was, plain as day to all who witnessed, floating down to the playing field.

**Destiny Hero — Bloo-D** — *LV8 Dark Warrior (1900 ATK)*

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 29: “The Caged Girl, the Boy in Flight”***

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Shougo stirred from his drug-induced sleep to see that a flat screen plasma television over his head was turned on. Ayukawa was sitting next to his bedside.

“I thought you should see some of the tournament in your waking hours,” she explained, and gave a closed-eyed smile.

A strange monster was on the television, sitting next to a duelist he’d never seen before, an Obelisk Blue wearing glasses.

“H… how?” Shougo gasped. “Are there cameras on the Duel Disks?”

“What a good guess,” Ayukawa said. “The new Genex Duel Disks all have cameras attached. We have a staff who’s getting the transmissions in and choosing which ones are best to air. Right now, I hear, the decision is unanimous. This girl has summoned the Ultimate D-Card.”

“The Ultimate D… she summoned Bloo-D?! I thought there were only five in the whole world!”

Ayukawa nodded. “I have a feeling we’re about to get an explanation…”

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Isabel basically reiterated Shougo’s shocked expression. “I heard they published Bloo-D along with ‘Destiny Rewritten’ as an Ultra Rare card… but there are supposed to be only five copies?”

“Horiuchi had one of them,” Mark reminded Isabel. “Remember his exhibition match with Shougo? He fused Bloo-D with Dogmaguy to make ‘Dragoon D-END’.”

“After that disgraceful match, the card was taken away from him,” Aino explained. “After some

disagreement about who the card should revert to, it fell into the hands of the Toragami zaibatsu. But there's a family that holds the four others, and are trying to buy the one that the Toragami zaibatsu holds."

"Mizuno Kagome's family?" Isabel queried.

"That's right," Katsuki said, with a quick roll of her eyes. "No one is sure where the Mizuno family got their money, but they're devoting it all to their princess of a daughter. I thought they were buying the cards as an investment, but apparently it's all for her sake."

"Says the girl who had her family create a card just for her!" Aino sneered. "You're one to talk."

"Well… that's just how business is, I guess," Katsuki said with a shrug of her shoulders.

"Destiny Hero Bloo-D's effect activates," Mizuno said. "The life force of one of your monsters becomes his to use! Bloo-D! Absorb the blood of those Harpie Lady Sisters… NOW!"

The force with which Mizuno delivered her command was another shock. The sisters hugged each other in fear, but when Bloo-D spread its wings, a vortex appeared which headed towards the

sisters. Unable to resist, they turned into dark red energy which flowed into Bloo-D

**Destiny Hero Bloo-D** — *1900 ATK + 975 = 2875 ATK*

“What a massive disgrace you’ve done to my beloved Harpies!” Heilos shouted. “Give them back!”

“They’re not anywhere,” Mizuno replied. “Their blood is now part of my Destiny Hero, their spirit fueling his rage. The same rage that my family feels when presented with rich buffoons born into money, or with duelist wannabe clowns like you!”

“Are you calling me a wannabe?!” Heilos was offended now. “You’d better back up your words!”

“I plan to,” Mizuno said with a smug chuckle. “But first I need to explain another important effect that Bloo-D has. You see, his presence dominates all other monsters, and makes them cower in fear, unable to use their special powers. In other words, your Harpies are about to become a little weaker.”

Bloo-D’s eyes glowed, and Heilos’ remaining Harpies shivered as their strengths drained.

**Harpie Lady 1** — *LV4 Wind Bird (1600 ATK — 300 = 1300 ATK)*
**Harpie Lady — SB** — *LV4 Wind Bird (2100 ATK — 300 = 1800 ATK)*

“What’s your beef with me?” Heilos asked. “Why are you using such harsh words?”

“Why?”

Mizuno rolled her eyes as if such a question were so obvious that to even ask it was an insult. “People seek many things in this world. Money is one of those things. But money is nothing but the representation of a debt. And so, we’re all in debt to a higher power. But who is that higher power, exactly?”

“What does this have to do with me?” Heilos said, clearly growing impatient.

“The Mizuno ‘clan’ isn’t a clan at all. It’s just my mother and father, and my father’s relatives. My mother was an only child, and her parents died while she was young. We made our money the square way, through smart investments and spending wisely. But does that matter?”

“I guess the answer is no,” Heilos said.

“Damn right the answer is no.” Mizuno turned her head. “In this world of dueling, all that matters is reputation. It’s not that Mizuno has a bad reputation. It’s that we have none at all! And in some ways, that’s even worse! But with this card…”

“What is she talking about?” Isabel asked.

Katsuki sighed softly. “You and Mark are new to Japanese culture,” she said. “I can’t give you the full lesson right now, but there are several powerful families in the world of dueling. Before Duel Monsters, they competed in mah jongg, shogi and other local games, but they proved their worth by winning, consistently.”

“That lust for winning extended to other areas,” Aino continued her thought. “Such as investments and real estate. Soon, these groups controlled and dominated the country. And since these families have existed for a long time, they’ve had many children, and those children have had children. In short, it’s a dynasty.”

“Is that so?” Mark mumbled. “Like Rockefellers and Kennedys? Doesn’t sound so different from America.”

“Humph…” Heilos scoffed to the side. “I’m still not hearing the reason how that involves me. In fact, if it wasn’t for that card sealing my lovely harpies away and canceling their effects, I could care less about it!”

Mizuno hissed. “Destiny Hero — Bloo-D!” she ordered her monster. “Destroy his Harpie Lady Cyber Bondage with Bloody Fears!”

The whole audience drew in a gasp as Bloo-D drew back its wings, and energy seemed to pulsate from within them. It then roared as its attack blasted Heilos’ field.

As Heilos’ Cyber Bondage Harpie Lady was pierced by Bloo-D’s toxic dark red rays, the green dressed duelist turned his head to the side in pain at the sight of his lovely monster destroyed.

**Heilos** *— 4000 LP — 1075 = 2925 LP*

Katsuki raised an eyebrow. “Why didn’t she attack the weaker Harpie Lady?”

“Shiho-chan, you need to pay attention to what’s going on,” Aino sighed. “She still has Airman on the field. If she destroyed Harpie Lady with Bloo-D, Airman would have to suicide against the other one.”

“Oh,” Katsuki said, and laughed uncomfortably. “I knew that! I was just testing you!”

Mark tried very hard not to roll his eyes.

“Elemental Hero Airman, destroy Heilos’ other bird!” Mizuno said, pointing with her Duel Disk arm at Heilos’ field. Airman obediently shot a blast of wind at Harpie Lady, who yelled as she was destroyed.

“You know what?” Heilos growled pointing at Bloo-D. “I take back my previous comment…”

**Heilos** — *2925 LP — 500 = 2425 LP*

Even as his Harpie Lady 1 was blasted away by Airman, Heilos continued to narrow his eyes. “I now have an interest in that card… For using and destroying my lovely ladies… I now aim to destroy it!”

“Do it if you can,” Mizuno spat. “Turn end!”

Slowly clicking a card from the top of his deck, Heilos looked at it before he leered at Mizuno, malice seeping from his eyes. “You gave me a sob story… But if you’re looking for a shoulder to cry on, look somewhere else.”

His thoughts became silent. *And if you try Toragami-sama's shoulder…*

"Your story is nothing compared to mine," Heilos continued, ignoring the comments. "Unlike you, I didn't have everything handed to me on a silver platter. The platter was already scavenged by my older brothers and sister… all to improve their success in the government, the business world, and law! I was practically a statue to the rest of my family and to anyone who met them!"

"'Statue'?" Mizuno rolled her eyes. "You sure talk an awful lot for a statue. And I suppose you think because you're such a hard worker, you deserve something for your trouble?"

"Humph, I'm not saying I'm a special case," Heilos spat… And then ran his fingers on the cravat at his neck. "But I doubt you would understand how I would feel… I never even had my own set of clothes, only hand-me-downs. Heck, I'm even wearing my eldest brother's cravat right now, my second older brother's shirt and my sister's belt."

"Sister's… belt?" Isabel quirked an eyebrow, while Mark couldn't help but burst into laughter.

“Ur… Uh, w-well,” Heilos coughed with a small blush appearing on his face. “It was either the belt, or my sister’s skirt…”

“A skirt would look better on you, I think!” Mizuno said, and then started to laugh in a somewhat high-pitched tone.

“Urk!” Heilos coughed. “N-Now’s not the time for fashion advice! Back to what I was getting at — I was treated like a statue by my family and would-be friends. The only treatment I’d really ever get were the insults by my so called older siblings. Heck, they just thought of me as a nuisance… treating me as the runt and thinking I was weak.

“And personally…” Heilos muttered turning his head to the side. “They were right.”

“Just get to the point already!” a Ra onlooker shouted.

“We have places to be!” an Osiris shouted. “Stop talking so much!”

“Humph… Impatient crowd,” Heilos stated looking over his hand of cards. “Sure, they allow the girl to speak, but when I pour my heart and soul out…”

Heilos snarled as he fitted the card into his duel disk's graveyard slot, "But fine! If you want me to make a move — Then here! Go! 'Hysteric Party'!"

That's when several feathers erupted from the ground, forming into two Harpie Lady 1s that were crouched down and the Harpie Lady — SB, all of them with enraged looks on their eyes.

**Harpie Lady — SB** — *1800 ATK*
**Harpie Lady 1** — *1400 DEF*
**Harpie Lady 1** — *1400 DEF*

"By discarding one card from my hand, 'Hysteric Party' returns my lovely ladies back to the field," Heilos explained flinging his hand out. "Even the one I had to sacrifice to activate it! And now… Harpie Lady — SB! Slay Airman!"

"You'll lose something too," Mizuno said as a shine glinted in her glasses. "Airman's attack points are the same! Counterattack, Airman!"

As his bondage adorned harpie flew through the air, a small tear appeared in the corner of Heilos' eye. *Forgive me…*

Both monsters' holograms exploded as they clashed in mid-air in a terrific spectacle. Mizuno smirked. "Did you think such a small-fry monster

could make a show of herself by committing suicide for her master?”

“This coming from a person who uses a card that is currently using the strength of my own card,” Heilos snarled with his arms crossed.

“… I guess it was a stretch for you to know this card’s history,” Mizuno groaned as she rolled her eyes at Heilos. “Ask any duelist and they’ll tell you that Bloo-D was originally one of a kind…”

Her personality suddenly shifted as she took on the appearance of a love-struck girl. “Just like Toragami-sama!”

Although he couldn’t read minds, Heilos couldn’t help but rub his temples with his free hand. Almost like a disturbance in the force…

“Who the hell do you think you are?” Katsuki shouted. “To flirt with Toragami-sama so openly like that?”

“…Yeah, what she said,” Heilos stammered.

Toragami didn’t say anything. She just coughed with her hand against her mouth. Aino glanced at her with concern.

Two loud crashes caught a few glances from the duel, the sources originating from Mark and Isabel falling flat on their faces.

Mizuno however, ignored everyone. “And this card was originally possessed by the one and only Edo Phoenix… The Destiny Duelist! But then again… Look who I’m talking to. You don’t even know who Kujaku Mai is, so the chances that you have even heard of Edo Phoenix is…”

“Ah yes, Phoenix is quite the duelist,” Heilos admitted. “And unlike this Kujyaki… whatever, I’ve actually heard of him… You’d have to live under a rock not to. So, I think you can spare us the history lesson. Turn end!”

“…I see,” Mizuno growled as she flicked off the top card from her deck, her eyes narrowing at its dragon-like art. “Perhaps I should’ve expected you to interrupt… Green-kun.”

“*Must* you call me that?” Heilos sighed with a bead of sweat rolling down the side of his head.

Mizuno ignored Heilos as her graveyard slot glowed brightly, allowing two cards to pop right out of her duel disk. “I remove two of my Cloudians

from my graveyard, in order to special summon the two ’Cloudian — Storm Dragon’s!”

The clouds from the Sanctuary in the Sky began to rage and crash with thunder, two of the clouds floating in front of Mizuno, twisting and turning until the clouds began to form into what appeared as two large dragon-shaped clouds, both of them roaring loudly into the sky.

**Cloudian — Storm Dragon** — *LV4 Water Angel (1000 ATK)*
**Cloudian — Storm Dragon** — *1000 ATK*

*W-Well… at least my lovely Harpies are strong enough to block those,* Heilos thought to himself.

…Before he realized that Mizuno was about to place a card onto her duel disk. *This is just typical…*

“I have yet to normal summon!” Mizuno announced as the clouds began form once more, this time turning into a large fluffy cloud that appeared to have a catty face, with several other smaller versions of the monster. “I summon ‘Cloudian — Cirrostratus’ in attack position!”

**Cloudian — Cirrostratus** — *LV4 Water Angel (900 ATK)*

The cloud then gave out a small meow, making Heilos snicker slightly. *This is becoming too much…*

“I wouldn’t laugh at Cirrostratus,” Mizuno advised as three puffs of cloud floated around the cat-shaped cloud. “Especially since when normal summoned, I can place one Fog Counter on the card for each Cloudian on the field.

“Currently, I have three of them. But let’s make it an even four shall we? I activate one of my Storm Dragon’s effect to place one Fog Counter on a card on the field.”

“… And what are these Fog Counters supposed to do?” Heilos asked with his arms raised slightly. “I highly doubt that you’d want to gather them just to add some decorations to your monsters…”

“I guess you’re not that dense,” Mizuno stated as Cirrostratus began to breathe in more air, making the Cloudian grow larger and larger. “Well, you’re right, Green-kun. You see, by removing two counters from Cirrostratus, I can destroy one monster on the field. So by removing four…”

Heilos’ eyes widened as the two harpies in front of him were blasted away by a powerful windstorm that erupted from Cirrostratus’ mouth, shattering the

two monsters into countless feathers that flew around his body.

“I can destroy your only defense,” Mizuno finished as her three Cloudians flew overhead.

And with that, Heilos’ eyes seemed to lose the very fire that was in them when he began this duel…

Even his face down card, ‘Triangle Ecstasy Spark’, could only serve as a bluff. He had intended to finish her with it, but now…

“You don’t even deserve to fall at the hands of Bloo-D,” Mizuno stated as all three of her Cloudians surrounded Heilos, electricity surging through their cloudy bodies. “So, Cirrostratus! Storm Dragons! Attack Green-Kun’s life points directly!”

Heilos perked his head up at the last second, realizing that countless bolts of electricity surged from the clouds, crashing into his body. Knowing that they holograms, however, didn’t really help Heilos deal with the pain of losing. But instead of yelling out as his life points continued to drain to zero, he only clenched his jaw shut.

**Heilos** — *2425 LP — 2900 = 0 LP*

And as the holograms began to disappear, Heilos fell to his knees as Mizuno laughed in haughty superiority. “My Plasma Cloud deck is flexible enough to overcome any situation,” she declared as her Star Point meter clicked up to 8. “Toragami-sama, you’ll see it for yourself soon!”

Lifting his head up, Heilos shot Mizuno a nasty glare. “Don’t act so haughty,” he muttered. “Toragami-sama will surely deal with you as she’s dealt with so many others…”

“Just one moment,” Aino reminded them. “You may have had an agreement with each other, but you never had an agreement with Toragami-sama.”

Mizuno gasped. “What? No! But I have eight Star Points! Doesn’t that prove I’m at least worthy of her attention?”

“You’re just a child in love with her own imagination,” Toragami muttered.

Mizuno seemed hurt to the core by this.

“In any case,” Aino went on. “If you want to duel Toragami, you will have to…”

“Hold everything!” Katsuki shouted at the top of her lungs.

The gathered crowd stared at Katsuki as she recovered her breath from that tremendous yell.

“Before you do anything, Naomi-chan, there’s one thing I have to do! One score I have to settle with a petulant little American!” She pointed dramatically at Mark.

“‘Riceman’?” Mark looked confused.

“*Beikokujin* means ‘American’,” Isabel whispered, looking embarassed.

“Mark Walker, I’ve been waiting a long time for this!” Katsuki said. “I’m going to get revenge for you humiliating me in front of the entire school!”

“What, a grudge match?” an onlooker muttered.

“Who cares about this? The result is obvious,” another said as she walked away. “Walker-kun was able to duel Toragami-san in the end, after all.”

“Katsuki-san’s just her pet dog, anyway,” another said.

Katsuki sweatdropped while still pointing at Mark. “You didn’t have to call me that,” she said with much chagrin.

“Why not?” Mark snapped, his Japanese suddenly coming through clearly. “You have no problem with calling me ‘Mark-dog’! That’s just karma! Why should I even duel you? Do you even have any Star points left?”

“I have three, as it happens,” Katsuki said, a vein on her forehead becoming visible. “And I’ll bet them all on you!”

Mark laughed and shook his head. “Hold on, who said I was going to duel you? I have seven star points. Beating you would be like taking candy from a baby. I’d never be able to live with myself!”

“What’s it to you how you get your Star points anyway?” Katsuki shouted with anger. “It’d be just another duel to you, right? Unless you’re afraid? Is that it?”

Mark just rolled his eyes and turned away, but he was stopped by Isabel.

“You should reconsider,” Isabel urged him.

“Why?” Mark whispered. “She’s just a bully.”

“Why do you think she’s on your case so much?” Isabel murmured. “She’s not gonna stop, you know?

She’s just gonna keep harassing you until you take her on head-on. And besides…”

She glanced back, making eye contact with Katsuki, who blushed and turned away.

“I think our little girl has a little bit of a crush on someone!” Isabel said and winked.

“You’re *kidding*!” Mark shouted.

“If you want to nip this in the bud, you should just crush her back… with your deck,” Isabel said. “Show that you’re not interested! Besides, you should take a girl’s feelings into consideration a little, even if you *are* a duelist.”

“Fine,” Mark said, turning to Katsuki. “But I’m not holding back. I don’t want to waste these moves of mine on someone like you, Katsuki-san… but I’ll show you that I’ll fight on equal terms with anyone, even with a girl who says she hates me!”

“I’d have to care about you to hate you!” Katsuki said. “You’re just an annoyance!”

“I’ll match you and bet 3 Star points myself,” Mark declared, activating his Duel Disk. “And I’m not going to change up my deck. What you saw is what you get!”

Katsuki turned on her own Duel Disk. “You bark like the dog that you are,” she muttered. “Now I’ll make you whimper like one!”

“Another storm, so soon after the last,” Toragami sighed.

“Buck up, Toragami-san,” Aino said. “It’s going to be a tumultuous day indeed…”

“Duel!” the two shouted.

---

**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD: *“Cloudian — Storm Dragon”***
Water fairy effect monster, attack points 1000, defense points 0. This card can only be summoned by excluding 1 Cloudian in the cemetery from the game. It can’t be destroyed by battle and if it’s in face up defense, it’s destroyed. You can put 1 Fog Counter on a monster on the field once per turn. Combo it with other Cloudians to get field presence quickly! This is the fighting spirit of the Cloudians!

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***Mark:*** *“How does someone like that Katsuki get in Obelisk?”*

***Aino:*** *"The duel between Katsuki-san and Walker-kun goes as expected. But is there something else going on?"*
***Katsuki:*** *"I'm not going to look like a fool again! I'm more than just Toragami-sama's footstool!"*
***Mizuno:*** *"But if you were her footstool, you'd be touched by her…"*
***Toragami:*** *"This will not end in your favor, Katsuki…"*
***Aino:*** *"While Walker-kun reveals some of his new tactics, Katsuki-san seems overwhelmed, and she's reacting rather oddly…"*
***Katsuki:*** *"I won't lose to this…* baka baka baka baka ba~ka!*"*
***Mark:*** *"That goes double for me, lady. Do you seriously think Allure Queens can hold up against this deck I worked so hard on?"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'A Duelist's Pride?! Mark vs. Katsuki, One More Time'****. Please enjoy."*
***Shougo:*** *"I don't like not being able to duel, but it's not all bad… I get to get taken care of by Ayukawa-sensei!"*

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***SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION***

## CARDS USED BY KAGOME MIZUNO:

**ELEMENTAL HERO AIRMAN** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Stratos)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Warrior, 1800/300)*
When this card is Normal or Special Summoned, you can select and activate one of these two effects:
* Destroy Magic or Trap Cards on the field equal to the number of “HERO” monsters you control other than “Elemental Hero Airman”.
* Select 1 “HERO” monster in your deck and add it to your hand.

**CLOUDIAN — SMOKE BALL**
*Normal Monster (LV1 Water Angel, 200/600)*
*Smoke Balls are newly born Cloudians. They fear being alone, and would rather swing and sway in the sky with their friends.*

**CLOUDIAN — TURBULENCE**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Angel, 800/0)*
This card is not destroyed as a result of battle. If this card is in face-up Defense Position, destroy it. When this card is Normal Summoned, place 1 “Fog Counter” on it for each face-up ‘Cloudian’ monster on the field. You can remove 1 “Fog Counter” from this card to Special Summon 1 “Cloudian — Smoke

Ball" from your Deck or from either player's cemetery.

**DESTINY HERO — BLOO-D** *(TCG name: Destiny Hero — Plasma)*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Dark Warrior, 1900/600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card cannot be Special Summoned except by sacrificing 3 monsters. Once per turn, select a monster your opponent controls and place it under your control as an Equip Card equipped to this card. (Only 1 monster can be equipped at a time.) This card gains Attack power equal to half the Attack power of the equipped monster, and any effects the card has.

**CLOUDIAN — STORM DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Angel, 1000/0)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned by removing from play 1 "Cloudian" monster from your cemetery. This card cannot be destroyed by battle. If this card is in face-up Defense Position, destroy it. Once per turn, you can place 1 Fog Counter on 1 monster on the field.

**CLOUDIAN — CIRROSTRATUS**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Angel, 900/0)*

This card cannot be destroyed by battle. If this card is in face-up Defense Position, destroy it. When you Normal Summon this card, place 1 Fog Counter on it for each “Cloudian” monster on the field. You can remove 2 Fog Counters from this card to destroy 1 monster on the field.

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**CARDS USED BY HEILOS TAI:**

**HARPIE LADY 1**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Bird, 1300/1400)*
This card’s name is treated as “Harpie Lady” at all times. All Wind-attribute monsters gain 300 Attack points.

**HARPIE LADY SISTERS**
*Effect Monster (LV6 Wind Bird, 1950/2100)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned by the effect of “Kaleidoscope — Magnificent Replication”.

**HARPIE LADY — SB** *(TCG name: Cyber Harpie Lady)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Wind Bird, 1800/1300)*
This card’s name is treated as “Harpie Lady”.

**HYSTERIC PARTY**
*Continuous Trap*

Discard 1 card from your hand. Special Summon as many “Harpie Lady” cards as possible from your cemetery. When this card is removed from the field, destroy all monsters that were Special Summoned by this card’s effect.

**TRIANGLE ECSTASY SPARK**

*Normal Magic*

Until the End Phase of this turn, the ATK of all “Harpie Lady Sisters” becomes 2700, your opponent cannot activate any Trap Cards, and the effect of every Trap Card on your opponent’s side of the field is negated.

# 30. Mark vs Katsuki, One More Time

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to leave me your thoughts via PM. Thank you very much for reading.*

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15 minutes ago…

Chiba was dueling fellow Osiris Red Almaz Wright near the Osiris dorms. For Almaz, it was an all-or-nothing duel, as he'd bet all his four Star points. From what Chiba'd seen, Almaz' previous two duels were similar, and he was concerned when

Almaz challenged him, but Chiba would never turn down a challenge.

**Chiba** — *1900 LP*
**Almaz** — *4000 LP*

Knowing Almaz ran Undead monsters, Chiba had changed his deck a bit. He felt a little bad about it, but it was important in a tournament to try your best, right? Besides, he needed the edge; even though Chiba had gotten his Command Knight lock going, Almaz had gotten three Wights into the grave, which made his “Wight King”, at 3000 attack points, too powerful for the Command Knights to take on.

“My turn, draw!” Chiba declared. He looked at the card he drew and smiled. “Alright, I activate the magic card ‘Soul Release’! This lets me remove up to five cards in either players’ cemetery from play. I’ll remove your three ‘Wight’s, your ’Mezuki’ and your ‘Necro Gardna’!”

Almaz gasped. “I shall activate ’Necro Gardna’s effect now, then! So your next battle will be negated!” He then ejected the five cards out of his cemetery and placed them in his pocket. He frowned, though. He had set a “Reward of Rebirth” card last turn as a bluff, but would Chiba call that bluff?

**Wight King** — *LV1 Dark Undead (3000 ATK — 3000 = 0 ATK)*

“Now I summon ‘Elemental Hero Wildman’ in attack mode,” Chiba said, wasting no time. “And due to my two Command Knights, he gains 800 attack points.”

The large, muscled hero came on the field wielding his blade, and an aura of power glowed around him as his attack points raised up.

**Elemental Hero Wildman** — *LV4 Earth Warrior (1500 ATK + 800 = 2300 ATK)*

Almaz gripped his fist.

“Command Knight, attack Wight King with Front Forward Assault!” Chiba ordered.

“Necro Gardna negates that attack, Herr Chiba,” Almaz said as the knight’s blade deflected off of the shadow of Necro Gardna.

“That’s fine,” Chiba replied, and then pointed dramatically, losing himself in the game. “My other Command Knight will destroy Wight King, and then Elemental Hero Wildman will finish the game!”

The other Knight slashed Wight King, who was reduced to a pile of bones. Since Almaz had no

Wights in his cemetery, he couldn’t revive it.

**Almaz** — *4000 LP — 2000 = 2000 LP*

He barely had time to recover before Wildman slashed his body. He shouted a cry of despair as he fell to his knees.

**Almaz** — *2000 LP — 2300 = 0*

His Star point meter ran to 0 while Chiba’s went up to 9.

“Sorry about that, Almaz-kun,” Chiba said, offering a hand to help him up. “I wasn’t certain that your facedown was a trap or not, but at the very least, Wildman would have done damage.”

“You’re a great duelist, Herr Chiba,” Almaz replied. “I’m nothing but a disappointment.”

“Don’t talk that way about yourself!” Chiba shouted. “Just because you’re in Osiris doesn’t mean…”

A loud gust of wind burst forth through the island suddenly. It was obviously generated by Solid Vision, but the power couldn’t be denied.

“Did you feel that, Herr Chiba?” Almaz said.

“Someone’s summoned a powerful monster,” Chiba replied, excitement slipping into his voice. “Come on, we should see that monster for ourselves before it’s too late.”

The two of them ran off together in the direction of the Ra dorms.

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 30: “A Duelist’s Pride?! Mark vs. Katsuki, One More Time”***

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“Duel!”

**Katsuki** — *4000 LP*
**Mark** — *4000 LP*

“‘Dice Roll’,” the Duel Disk said, and the holographic dice reappeared. Mark rolled a 1, while Katsuki rolled a 6.

She grinned wickedly. “Looks like it’s my decision, and I go first! Draw! Magic card, ‘Angel’s Charity’, activate! I draw 3 cards from my deck, then discard 2 from my hand.”

Katsuki pulled three cards, then placed the cards “Queen’s Bodyguard” and “Allure Queen Level 7” into her cemetery.

“Hmph, so you’re ditching your ace this early in the game?” Mark said with a coy smile. “What are you up to, missy?”

“You’ll see for yourself in a minute, loser,” Katsuki replied, with her own smug smirk. “I set one card, then summon ‘Allure Queen Level 3’ to the field.”

The lowest evolution of the Allure Queen appeared on the field, with a spark of fire in her hand.

**Allure Queen Level 3** — *LV3 Dark Spellcaster (500 ATK)*

“Turn end,” Katsuki said wickedly.

“What a weakling!” Mizuno observed with a roll of the eyes. “It’s such an obvious trap.”

“I’m thinking that’s what Katsuki-san wants Walker-kun to think,” Aino said. “She’s not the type to take such an obvious strategy.”

“I dunno,” Isabel thought out loud. “Katsuki acts kind of funny where that guy’s concerned.”

“My turn! Draw!” Mark shouted.

*There’s no way she’d summon such a weak monster in attack mode without a plan,* Mark thought to himself. *She’s obviously trying to trick me into attacking. Oh well. I’ll play her game for now.*

“I summon… ‘Warrior of Atlantis’ in attack mode!” Mark shouted, posing dramatically as the sea warrior appeared on the field, with a hand-spear cannon on its wrist.

**Warrior of Atlantis** — *LV4 Water Aqua (1900 ATK)*

“That’s an odd play,” Aino said with her hand on her chin. “He can discard that card to get ‘Legendary City Atlantis’. Isn’t that a key card for his strategy?”

“I think he’s changed his deck since his duel with Toragami-san,” Isabel said, giving the duelist a cursory glance. “I saw him use a card called ‘Defender of Atlantis’. I think he might have more of a theme going.”

“Walker-san has read Katsuki-san’s strategy,” Toragami remarked. “Let’s just watch it play out.”

“Toragami-san…” Isabel pondered with wonder on this girl.

“Warrior of Atlantis!” Mark ordered. “Attack Allure Queen Level 3! Atlantis Sniper!”

“No way!” Katsuki shouted. “Reverse card open, continuous trap ‘Cry of the Living Dead’! With this, I can summon a monster from my cemetery in attack position! Come out, ‘Queen’s Bodyguard’!”

Three elite looking swordsman appeared on the field on top of the “Queen’s Bodyguard” card. One of them drew his sword over Allure Queen as if to protect her, the others stood on guard.

**Queen’s Bodyguard** — *LV4 Earth Warrior (1700 ATK)*

“By the effect of ‘Queen’s Bodyguard’, you’re prohibited from attacking ‘Allure Queen’ monsters on my field! So your ‘Warrior of Atlantis’ will have to attack my bodyguards to get to the Queen!”

“With pleasure!” Mark shouted. “Do it, Warrior of Atlantis!”

The Warrior shot out three arrows, which destroyed each of the bodyguards depicted on the card. Katsuki grunted as her life points dropped.

**Katsuki** — *4000 LP — 200 = 3800 LP*

“I see why he did that now,” Mizuno said, nodding her head. “If he’d dumped Warrior for ‘Legendary City Atlantis’, level 4 monsters he’d summon would become level 3s, and ‘Allure Queen’ could equip them.”

“Plus, he saw through Katsuki-san’s plan when she sent ‘Queen’s Bodyguard’ to the cemetery last turn,” Aino added. “He knew she might try to psych him out, but he called her bluff.”

“I set two cards and end my turn,” Mark said. “You’re up, little miss.”

Katsuki got visibly angry at his casual tone. “You don’t have a right to call me names!” she shouted before she drew her card. “You’re only here because the chancellor gave you a lucky break!”

“Look, I don’t care about however you feel about me,” Mark replied. “We’re dueling, so either make your play or surrender. I don’t really want to listen to you.”

“Why you…” Katsuki clenched her fist and appeared ready to just drop the game so she could punch Mark in the mouth.

“Katsuki-san,” Toragami said. “Retain your composure.”

Katsuki blushed at being scolded by Toragami. She heard everyone around her whisper about her, and it just made her angrier, but she held herself back.

“Do you really care what these people say about you?” Aino added. “As long as you try your hardest, does it really matter?”

“But Naomi-chan…” Katsuki protested.

“I’m waiting, Shiho!” Mark shouted, visibly irritated.

“What’s with these two?” Mizuno asked Isabel.

“When Walker-kun came to this school, because of some mishaps with his paperwork, he came here late,” Isabel explained. “He had to duel Katsuki-san for the right to get in. He didn’t just defeat her, though… he humiliated her.”

“That’s a good point,” Chiba added in, hearing her dialogue. He and Almaz ran in, out of breath. “You didn’t hear about it, Mizuno-san? That duel’s a bit of a legend around here now. Walker-kun used ‘Ocean Dragon Lord — Neo-Daedalus’ and ‘Fenrir’ in a combo to make Katsuki have to skip her turn.”

“Who are you and how do you know my name?” Mizuno asked, somewhat disturbed.

“Oh, sorry,” Chiba laughed. “I’m Chiba Katsurou; we have a mathematics class together. I just have a good memory, I suppose…”

“And nine Star points,” Isabel said, looking at Chiba’s Duel Disk. “Very impressive! Especially for an Osiris.”

“I was hoping to duel Shougo-kun to get into the finals,” Chiba said. “But since he’s in the hospital, he hasn’t had a chance to gain any.”

Almaz frowned.

Katsuki looked at the card she drew and chuckled with mirth. “You may have gotten lucky before, loser, but not this time,” she said. “I activate the magic card ‘Terra Forming’.”

She fanned out her deck. “I can pick one field magic card and put it in my hand. But let’s not waste each other’s time, shall we? I activate ‘Court of the Allure Queen’!”

Mark grit his teeth. *Here it comes.*…

The image of the interior ballroom of a castle threw itself up and around the duelists and the

observers.

“‘Court of the Allure Queen’?” Mizuno said. “What the hell is that?”

“It’s a one-of-a-kind card that Katsuki-san had her family make for her,” Chiba replied. ‘And by the way… is this the duel that caused all the commotion?’ He raised an eyebrow. “It looks like it just started.”

“No, that was me,” Mizuno replied, not even trying to hide her pride. “I was the talk of the school! And you weren’t here? Shame on you!”

“Mizuno-san summoned ‘Destiny Hero — Bloo-D’,” Isabel explained.

“No way!” Chiba gasped. “How did you get that…”

“Enough talk,” Toragami said, surprising everyone with her presence. “Just observe the duel.”

Chiba blushed. *I didn’t even notice that Toragami-san and Aino-san were here*, he thought to himself. *Whatever light I saw before during Toragami-san’s duel with Judai-sama is gone now. You really are a mystery to me…*

“I activate ‘Court of the Allure Queen’s effect… Royal Ceremony!” Katsuki said. “I can remove from play an ’Allure Queen’ card on the field to use its effect to Special Summon a card written on its text. So, I know what you were planning by summoning ‘Warrior of Atlantis’ instead of using its effect, but it’s pointless!”

Royal retainers surrounded Allure Queen and dressed her up. When they had left, her next higher level was on the field.

**Allure Queen Level 5** — *LV5 Dark Spellcaster (1000 ATK)*

“Now, Allure Queen! Bring that Warrior of Atlantis to our side!”

Fire began to form around Mark’s monster that would seduce it to Allure Queen’s side.

“Now, finally, I’m going to make you feel the same humiliation you gave to me!” Katsuki muttered. “You can’t imagine what you put me through.”

“What are you talking about?” Mark asked, with a look of disgust on his face. “You let a duel get to you that much?”

But Katsuki wasn't listening anymore; her eyes were closed and she was frowning deeply as she recalled her life after that duel…

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*"That's Katsuki Shiho, isn't it?"*

*"Yeah, the one that lost to that American kid. You weren't there? Man, I'd have hated to be her."*

*"No kidding. I mean, at first I thought she had to be good since she knew Toragami-san so well, but I guess it's just because she was born into money. To get beaten so badly by a foreigner… it's a waste of time even challenging her."*

*Katsuki frowned as she tried to focus on her schoolwork, but she couldn't deny that their words bothered her. She wasn't a bad duelist in any sense — she'd had to take the entrance exam like everyone else, and before her duel with Mark Walker, Katsuki had a decent record.*

*But now, no one would even duel her anymore.*

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“You just waltzed in to this school and ruined my life, you loser,” Katsuki shouted. “What makes you think you can do that?”

“Hey, if you’ll remember, *you* are the one who challenged *me*,” Mark said. “It’s your own fault! And by the way, did you honestly think I didn’t see that card coming?”

“What?” Katsuki was indignant.

Mark made his explanation clear through the game. “Reverse card open! ‘Interdimensional Matter Transporter’! I remove a monster I control from play until the End Phase of this turn. The monster I pick, of course, is ‘Warrior of Atlantis’!”

The warrior’s image shimmered away, causing the fire of the Allure Queen to have no target.

Katsuki growled. “What a dirty trick,” she muttered.

“You’re such a hypocrite!” Mark shot back. “Listen to yourself. You’re using a card that your *family* made for you, and you’d dare to call *my* tricks dirty?”

To this, Katsuki gasped in shock. “Wh… what?”

“What kind of duelist uses a card that no one else can get to gain an advantage over her opponent?” Mark said. “Do you really think your Allure Queens stand a chance without that broken field spell?”

“Don’t talk about that card! It’s none of your business!”

“We’re dueling, so it’s very much my business.” Mark shook his head, and a wry smile appeared on his face. “Maybe everyone making fun of you bugs you because what they’re saying is true. Ever thought about that, little miss?”

“I’m going to make you pay for your tone. I normal summon ‘Critter’ in attack mode.”

A three-eyed puffball appeared on the field, showing eagerness to fight.

**Critter** — *LV3 Dark Demon (1000 ATK)*

“Battle! Allure Queen, direct attack on the player! Seduction No. 5!”

Allure Queen twirled her staff in her hand as she rushed Mark’s field, and then clobbered him on the head. Mark winced.

**Mark** — *4000 LP — 1000 = 3000 LP*

“Don’t think it’s over yet! Critter, attack him too!”

Mark tried to recover his wits as the small puffball uppercutted him. *What the hell is this feeling? I know it isn’t real, so what’s going on…?*

**Mark** — *3000 LP — 1000 = 2000 LP*

“Well, Katsuki-san managed to do some damage,” Isabel remarked. “But Warrior of Atlantis is coming back next turn and there’s nothing she can do about it.”

“She’s not trying to win,” Toragami said.

“What?” Chiba looked quizzically at the Obelisk Blue student. “I don’t understand.”

“Of course you don’t,” Toragami replied, and despite the nature of her reply it didn’t sound contemptuous. “You understand that this is a game. My friend Katsuki-san sometimes forgets herself.”

“Forgets herself?” Chiba sighed, not wanting to admit that he didn’t understand that either.

“Katsuki-san has a very large reputation to uphold,” Aino explained. “Her families, ours and Toragami-sama’s have been friends for a very long time, but the Katsuki clan has their own financial

duties. When Shiho-chan's parents die, she is expected to take charge. But that's not a burden she wants."

"She's far too young to be expected to desire such a thing," Toragami said. "Katsuki-san is still a child and still sees the world through a child's eyes. She's still trying to define herself as an individual. That boy, Mark Walker, possesses a very strong will. He is similar to her."

"'Similar'?" Isabel laughed a bit. "I'm sorry, Toragami-san, but to me it looks like the difference in their skill is obvious."

Toragami sighed and rubbed her forehead, closing her eyes. "Have you not yet understood that this game is not about skill?"

*Not about skill?* Isabel did a double take. *I don't understand this girl at all…*

"I set one card and end my turn," Katsuki said.

"On my End Phase, 'Warrior of Atlantis' returns to my field," Mark said as the warrior returned to him. And before I enter my Draw Phase, I reveal my other facedown… 'Cyclone'!"

“How boring,” Katsuki said. “I guess you’re going to get rid of my ’Court…’”

“I target your facedown,” Mark interrupted her.

Katsuki grunted as her facedown “Holy Barrier — Mirror Force” was destroyed.

“Who’s calling who boring?” Mark laughed as he drew his card. “And on that note, it’s not like I don’t have a reason to hate you either!”

Katsuki narrowed her eyes. “Why would you? You beat me.”

“And you’ve been giving me crap about it ever since!” Mark said, his voice rising but not reaching the shrill tones of Katsuki’s anger. “And don’t think you’re alone! Sure, everyone’s whispering about your skill, but you’ve got friends! Other than Isabel-san, I’ve been alone in this Academy, thanks to the attitude that ignorant xenophobes like you have fostered!”

Katsuki felt like she was pinned to a wall by Mark’s response.

“It’s true that I’m an American, and the country I come from has a reputation for being full of ego,” Mark said. “But you don’t even give me a chance! I

come here late because my school messed up my application, and I had to jump through hoops to get in! I got lucky defeating you the first time… I acknowledge that. But that's only because I underestimated you."

Katsuki bit her lip, then anger welled up in her again. "Don't give me that 'it's not fair' routine! There's nothing fair about Japanese life!"

"Oh, so you think it's better in America?" Mark queried. "All of us kids have to prove ourselves day to day, no matter where you're from. At least in Japan, you have to earn your place by being smart… or so I thought. It didn't take me long to learn money matters just as much here as it does there… no, maybe more so. And your attitude isn't helping to change that."

"I have nothing to do with all of that!" Katsuki shouted. "It's been like this for centuries!"

"Well, the times, they are a-changing," Mark said in English. "I summon 'Imperial of Atlantis' in attack mode."

A more royally-endowed soldier came to the field, holding a trident.

**Imperial of Atlantis** — *LV4 Water Warrior (1700 ATK)*

“Is that another new card?” Isabel remarked. “Looks like Mark-kun’s been keeping secrets from me?”

“Oh?” Mizuno teased. “So you have *that* kind of relationship…”

Isabel chuckled and sighed. “Think that if you want. To me, he’s just a good rival. I mean, my deck is fire, so it’s natural, right?”

“Oh, natural has nothing to do with it, I’m sure.” Mizuno leered perversely, making everyone else extremely uncomfortable.

“It’s time to duel!” Mark shouted, once again in English, as he entered his Battle Phase. “Warrior of Atlantis, destroy Allure Queen. Atlantis Sniper!”

The warrior obeyed immediately, shooting its arrow into Allure Queen’s body. Her shout was loud as she was destroyed.

**Katsuki** — *4000 LP — 900 = 3100 LP*

“Imperial of Atlantis, you’re up next! Get rid of Critter! Atlantis Sword!”

His other monster obeyed quickly, thrusting its spear into the fluffy monster. It shuddered once before it was destroyed, too.

**Katsuki** — *3100 LP — 700 = 2400 LP*

“Well, for your information, Critter has a special effect!” Katsuki shot back.

“You think I’m in kindergarten?” Mark said. “You can add one monster with 1500 attack points or less from your deck to your hand. We both know what you’re going to add, so just get on with it.”

Katsuki frowned as she placed another copy of Allure Queen Level 3 in her hand, and her Duel Disk shuffled her deck for her.

“Now my Battle Phase is finished, but my turn isn’t over yet,” Mark said. “Since you no longer have an Allure Queen, I can activate my own field magic… which, by the way, I’ve had in my hand this whole time. ‘Legendary City Atlantis’, activate!”

The royal courtyard was broken and rather unceremoniously replaced with the underwater field magic spell.

“My monsters’ attack and defense points are raised by 200, and their levels are lowered by 1,”

Mark went on as his Atlantis monsters' powers raised.

**Warrior of Atlantis** (1900 ATK + 200 = 2100 ATK)
**Imperial of Atlantis** (1700 ATK + 200 = 1900 ATK)

*So what?* Katsuki said, looking at her hand. *It's true I only have one copy of 'Court of the Allure Queen', but I have plenty of ways of getting it back! In fact, I have 'Magic Shard Excavation' in my hand just waiting for him.*

She then frowned with a thought. *But to use a card only available to me…* She shook her head. *No! I'll do whatever it takes to win!*

"I know you" ve probably got a way to get that card back in your hand, "Mark said, seeming to read her thoughts." But I don't intend to allow that! I send 'Warrior of Atlantis' and 'Imperial of Atlantis' from my field, and 'Defender of Atlantis' from my hand, into the cemetery!"

"What?" Mizuno gulped. "What *is* he summoning? Whatever it is, *I*'ve never heard of it."

*I have,* Isabel thought with a stern look on her face. *Mark, aren't you overdoing it a bit?*

Mark raised his hand into the air. “I summon now Atlantis’ strongest soldier… the Guardian of Atlantis, Oceanus!”

From underneath the ground of the Legendary City sprouted forth a figure that looked like a Roman god — who was, in fact, named for the Roman Titan who ruled the seas. His muscular figure was an oddity compared to his aged complexion, and he thrust his fists out a few times before finally posing for battle.

**Oceanus, the Guardian of Atlantis** — *LV9 Water Warrior (3800 ATK + 200 = 4000 ATK)*

“4000 attack points?!” Mizuno gulped. “That’s… that’s ridiculous!”

“That’s what I was expecting,” Isabel said. “Walker-kun seems to be beta testing some cards I heard Industrial Illusions had just designed. To think he’d use it on someone like Katsuki-san… but I suppose it’s to be expected.”

“I can only summon this card while ‘Atlantis’ is the field magic,” Mark said. “And while it’s on the field, no other field magic can be played and it cannot be destroyed! Sound familiar?”

Katsuki bared her teeth, obviously frustrated.

“This card was inspired by none other than the Legendary Duelist himself, Mutou Yugi-san!” Mark went on, sounding very deferential. “One of his aces was ‘Valkyrion, the Magna Warrior’, which also was summoned by tributing three cards from the hand or field. Rumor has it, these were the key cards in his… oh, but I’m going on.”

“Your Battle Phase is over,” Katsuki said. “So unless you have more showboating to do, please just end your turn.”

“I’d be glad to!” Mark laughed. “I would like to see you get out of this one, you poor little rich girl!”

Katsuki looked at her deck. *I won’t let him make a fool out of me. I swear it!*

“My turn… draw!”

*Otherwise… how can I live with myself?*

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**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD: *“Oceanus, the Guardian of Atlantis”***
Level 9 water warrior, attack power 3800, defense power 3600. Send Warrior, Defender and Imperial of Atlantis from the hand or field to summon this while “Legendary City Atlantis” in the field; you can then

tribute it to summon them back. This card holds incredible power while protecting the field! Keep fighting for the victory!

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***Shougo:*** *"I wasn't in this one! What the hey?"*
***Aino:*** *"As Walker-kun and Katsuki-san's duel progresses, the outcome seems to be clear. The nature of their relationship, less so."*
***Toragami:*** *"I think my friend may finally be starting to mature…"*
***Chiba:*** *"I don't think Katsuki-san will let it end just like that, though… Hey, where did Almaz-san go?"*
***Aino:*** *"In the meantime, Tenjouin-sensei decides to be up front and ask Kiyotaki-kouchou about the mysterious 'Illuminati'. Much to her surprise, he answers her without pretense."*
***Chiba:*** *"Um… Almaz-san is not here, and for some reason I'm worried about Shougo-kun…"*
***Aino:*** *"As more duelists are eliminated in the Genex tournament, motivations are revealed next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Questions without Answers, The Truth of the Illuminati'****."*
***Shougo:*** *"Ayukawa-sensei needs sleep like everyone else, but how can I protect myself while I need sleep, too?"*

***Toragami:*** *"Aoyama Shougo… don't spoil it for everyone."*
***Shougo:*** *"Sorry…"*

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**CARDS USED BY ALMAZ WRIGHT:**

**WIGHT KING** *(TCG name: King of the Skull Servants)*
*Effect Monster (LV1 Dark Undead,?/0)*
The original attack points of this card becomes the number of "Wight" s and 'Wight King "s in your cemetery x 1000. When this card is destroyed by battle and sent to the cemetery, by removing in your cemetery 1" Wight' or "Wight King" other than this card from play, Special Summon this card.

**WIGHT** *(TCG name: Skull Servant)*
*Normal Monster (LV1 Dark Undead, 300/200)*
*A skeletal ghost that isn't very strong, but can get serious in large numbers.*

**MEZUKI**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Dark Undead, 1700/800)*
You can remove this monster in your cemetery from play to Special Summon 1 Undead-type monster in your cemetery.

**NECRO GARDNA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Warrior, 600/1300)*
Remove this card in your cemetery from play to negate 1 attack this turn from a monster your opponent controls.

**REWARD OF REBIRTH** *(TCG name: Card of Safe Return)*
*Continuous Magic*
When a monster is Special Summoned to the field from your cemetery, you can draw 1 card.

---

**CARDS USED BY KATSUROU CHIBA:**

**COMMAND KNIGHT**
*Effect Monster (L4 Fire Warrior, 1200/1900)*
While this card is face-up on the field, all Warrior-type Monsters you control gain 400 ATK. When there is 1 Monster card on the field other than this card, your opponent cannot select “Command Knight” as an attack target.

**SOUL RELEASE**
*Normal Magic*
Select up to 5 cards in either player’s cemeteries and remove them from play.

**ELEMENTAL HERO WILDMAN** *(TCG name: Elemental Hero Wildheart)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Earth Warrior, 1500/1600)*
This monster is unaffected by Trap Cards.

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**CARDS USED BY SHIHO KATSUKI:**

**ANGEL'S CHARITY** *(TCG name: Graceful Charity)*
*Normal Magic*
Draw 3 cards, then discard 2 cards from your hand.

**QUEEN'S BODYGUARD**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Earth Warrior, 1700/1200)*
"Allure Queen" monsters you control cannot be selected as an attack target.

**ALLURE QUEEN LEVEL 7**
*Effect Monster (LV7 Dark Spellcaster, 1500/1500)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, if this card was Special Summoned by the effect of "Allure Queen Level 5", you can select 1 monster on your opponent's side of the field, and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time can be equipped due to this effect.) If this card would be destroyed as a result of battle, this card is destroyed instead.

**ALLURE QUEEN LEVEL 3**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Spellcaster, 500/500)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase 1, you can select 1 Level 3 or lower monster on your opponent's side of the field, and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time can be equipped due to this effect.) If this card would be destroyed as a result of battle, this card is destroyed instead. During your Standby Phase, by sending this card to the cemetery while it's equipped due to its effect, Special Summon 1 "Allure Queen Level 5" from your hand or deck.

**CRY OF THE LIVING DEAD** *(TCG name: Call of the Haunted)*
*Continuous Trap*
Select 1 monster in your cemetery and Special Summon it to the field. If the selected monster is destroyed, destroy this card. If this card is destroyed, destroy the Special Summoned monster.

**TERRA FORMING** *(TCG name: Terraforming)*
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 Field Magic card in your deck and add it to your hand.

**COURT OF THE ALLURE QUEEN** *( "Negative Zero" original card)*

*Field Magic*
Monster Cards that are equipped to “Allure Queen” monsters are considered to be owned by the ‘Allure Queen’’s owner for the remainder of the Duel. The controller of an “Allure Queen” monster gains the following effects:
* Once per turn, during your Main Phase, you can remove from play 1 “Allure Queen” monster you control to activate its effect to Special Summon the monster written on its text.
* The Attack points of an “Allure Queen” monster equipped with its effect are increased by the monster’s original Attack points.
* No other Field Magic cards can be activated while an “Allure Queen” monster is face-up on the field.

**ALLURE QUEEN LEVEL 5**
*Effect Monster (LV5 Dark Spellcaster, 1000/1000)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase, if this card was Special Summoned by the effect of “Allure Queen Level 3”, you can select 1 Level 5 or lower monster on your opponent’s side of the field, and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time can be equipped due to this effect.) If this card would be destroyed as a result of battle, this card is destroyed instead. During your Standby Phase, by sending this card to the cemetery while it’s equipped due to its

effect, Special Summon 1 “Allure Queen Level 7” from your hand or deck.

**CRITTER** *(TCG name: Sangan)*
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Demon, 1000/600)*
When this card is sent from the field to the cemetery, select 1 monster with 1500 attack points or less and add it to your hand.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE** *(TCG name: Mirror Force)*
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Destroy all monsters in Attack position that your opponent controls.

---

**CARDS USED BY MARK WALKER:**

**WARRIOR OF ATLANTIS**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Aqua, 1900/1200)*
You can discard this card to the cemetery to add 1 “Legendary City Atlantis” from your deck to your hand.

**INTERDIMENSIONAL MATTER TRANSPORTER**
*Normal Trap*

Remove 1 face-up monster you control from play until the End Phase of this turn.

**CYCLONE** *(TCG name: Mystical Space Typhoon)*
*Instant Magic*
Destroy 1 Magic or Trap Card on the field.

**IMPERIAL OF ATLANTIS** *( "Negative Zero" original card)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Warrior, 1700/1000)*
If "Legendary City Atlantis" is on the field, once per turn, you can move a 'Defender of Atlantis' or "Warrior of Atlantis" from your cemetery to your hand.

**LEGENDARY CITY ATLANTIS** *(TCG name: A Legendary Ocean)*
*Field Magic*
This card's name is treated as "Ocean". All Water-attribute monsters gain 200 Attack. Downgrade the level of all Water-attribute monsters in both players' hands and on the field by 1.

**DEFENDER OF ATLANTIS** *( "Negative Zero" original card)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Warrior, 200/2400)*
If this monster is in Defense position, its Defense points are is lowered by 1000 every time it is

attacked, until its controller's next Standby Phase. If "Legendary City Atlantis" is on the field, and would be destroyed by a card effect, you may sacrifice this face-up monster to negate that effect and destroy the card.

**OCEANUS, THE GUARDIAN OF ATLANTIS** *( "Negative Zero" original card)*
*Effect Monster (LV9 Water Warrior, 3800/3600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned by sending "Warrior of Atlantis", 'Defender of Atlantis' and "Imperial of Atlantis" from your hand or field to the cemetery while "Legendary City Atlantis" is on the field. While this monster is on the field, "Legendary City Atlantis" may not be removed from the field by your opponent. If "Warrior of Atlantis", "Defender of Atlantis" and "Imperial of Atlantis" exist in the cemetery, you can offer this card as a Sacrifice to Special Summon these 3 cards to the field.

# 31. The Truth of the Illuminati

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (vm_). Thank you very much for reading.*

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**Katsuki** — *2400 LP*
**Mark** — *2000 LP*

Katsuki stared down her American opponent as she pulled her next card out of her deck for her turn. Mark had out a heavy-hitting card, "Oceanus, the Guardian of Atlantis" with 4000 attack points, and the "Legendary City Atlantis" field, which Oceanus protected.

Katsuki, on the other hand, had nothing save an Allure Queen in her hand which wouldn't help her at all.

Watching the duel were her long time friends, Naomi Aino and the legend Hinata Toragami, along with Mark's friends, Isabel Surez, Katsurou Chiba. Also watching were Kagome Mizuno, awaiting her opportunity to duel Toragami in front of everyone, and the mysterious child Almaz Wright.

Nobody else cared much to watch this duel other than in passing. They felt the conclusion was obvious.

"It's my turn!" Katsuki shouted. "Draw!"

*I won't let this clown beat me… Naomi-chan, Hinata-chan… I'll prove that* I *am a duelist, too!*

---

***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 31: "Questions without Answers, The Truth of the Illuminati"***

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Asuka Tenjouin was supposed to be monitoring the duels, but after her duel with Judai, her thoughts had been weighing heavy on her mind. She kept thinking of Heinrich, and how close Shougo had come to death.

She also remembered the “Illuminati” that Heinrich had claimed to be a part of, and how he’d suggested that Kiyotaki was from that organization too. So she was headed to the Chancellor’s office to question him about that.

And, to her shock if not surprise, Kiyotaki was standing at the doorway, expecting her.

“I’ve been waiting for you, Tenjouin-san,” Kiyotaki replied. “In fact, I thought you’d be here sooner.”

“Well,” Tenjouin blushed and rubbed the back of her head. “I had this and that to do…”

“Well, none of that matters now.” Kiyotaki smiled faintly. “You have many questions, and I feel I’m ready to answer all of them. Come into my office.”

As Tenjouin hesitantly did as she was told, Kiyotaki turned to his executive assistant. “Hold all

my calls," he said, and then followed her in, closing the door behind them.

---

Katsuki looked at the card she drew. *'Lightning Vortex'?*

She looked at Mark's field, with the powerhouse "Oceanus". *Lightning Vortex is the only way I can defeat him now.* Katsuki looked at the other cards in her hand. *'Magic Shard Excavation', "Regulus" and "Allure Queen LV3". My original plan was to use "Excavation" to get "Court" back, but even without Oceanus' protection effect, that won't do anything for me!*

*I have to use "Lightning Vortex"…*

Katsuki thought back on the card that she had her family create for her, "Court of the Allure Queen"…

---

*"Mother, father, look at these cards! Aren't they great?"*

*"I know you really like those cards, Shiho-chan, but if you want to be a duelist, you can't use them!*

*They're just too weak."*

*"Oh, come on. I know if I try really hard, I can do it! Look, she's so pretty…"*

*Shiho's parents sighed at each other. "What will we do with this girl?" her mother asked.*

---

"What's with Katsuki-san's hesitation?" Isabel said as Katsuki puzzled over her hand. "It's not like she has a lot of options."

"She wants to get that field magic back in her hand, even though she knows it's pointless," Toragami said with a sigh. "That card is everything to her."

"Well, of course it is," Mizuno replied with a roll of her eyes. "Without that card, those small fry Allure Queens can't do a damned thing!"

"Katsuki-san is a child," Toragami said simply. "She doesn't want to win unless she can win her way. And that boy, Mark… she can't tolerate his existence."

"But this isn't a rivalry," Chiba remarked. "It's not like what I have with Shougo-kun. This just

looks like hatred to me!”

*Chiba Katsurou, surely you with your insight can understand what’s really going on,* Toragami thought to herself. *There’s no need for words with you, is there?*

“Sometime this century, if you please?” Mark said.

“Don’t rush me!” Katsuki shouted. Her mind was still on the past.

---

*“Happy birthday, Shiho-chan…”*

*“Wow, you had a card made just for me. ‘Court of the Allure Queen’… great! This will make me able to win!”*

*“Well, we saw you lose to those other girls and you looked so sad… we pulled some strings with people we know at Industrial Illusions and had that made. Take good care of it, Shiho-chan.”*

*“I will, mother… father… thank you…”*

---

Tenjouin and Kiyotaki stood in the Chancellor's office, the lights lowered and the shades drawn.

"Since you've been expecting me, I assume you know about what happened to Shougo-kun," Tenjouin said, crossing her arms. "That would mean my suspicions are correct."

Kiyotaki looked out the window, not facing Tenjouin yet.

"I cannot believe you would hide this from me!" Tenjouin shouted. "Have you been waiting for this kind of thing to happen? Forcing Shougo-kun to enter this Academy to test his limits and his strength, even at the risk of his life? I know what you said before about Samejima-kouchou is correct but… that doesn't make this right."

Kiyotaki exhaled. "Tenjouin-san… there are different levels of knowledge."

Tenjouin paused, confused by his statement.

"There is an organization dedicated to unifying the world and identifying the supernatural," he went on. "It is not a secret organization. We merely do not call attention to ourselves. The man you encountered… yes, he's from the Illuminati, as am I.

But an attempt on Aoyama-kun's life was not what I had in mind."

Tenjouin suppressed her impulse to ask if it was true. It was obvious, at this point, that there was much more going on here, more than the most meager amount of information she had could satisfy.

"The Illuminati have existed for about as long as man has been able to speak," Kiyotaki went on. "He recorded his own findings of his observations, and called this 'science'. However, through the millennia, many happenings have occurred that were even beyond the realm of observations, and so men, fearing for their survival, decided to do their best to prevent such occurrences."

Tenjouin took a seat, figuring she would be here for awhile.

Kiyotaki turned to face the Obelisk proessor at last. "Tenjouin-san, the battle between Darkness and Light is older than you or I know. That Light has lent a hand to the Darkness, I have to admit, is a cause for a great deal of concern. However, I never suspected that the Illuminati would go this far to stop the war."

"The war…?"

Kiyotaki nodded. “The war that Darkness — chaos, fear, life — initiated long ago against the Light — order, faith, death — it may be coming to an end soon. And the future of humanity is in doubt. I fear that is why our organization is making such bold moves.”

“Darkness… started it?” Tenjouin looked confused as she struggled to understand Kiyotaki’s words.

---

“Shiho, quit your lagging!” Mark shouted. “I’m getting tired of waiting.”

Katsuki frowned deeply. *I want to get that card in my hand, but I know it won’t help me win! I have to discard two of my cards, and one of them has to be a monster… either Regulus or my Allure Queen.*

*I could summon Regulus and get “Court” back in my deck… but then… who knows when I’d draw it?*

Katsuki felt herself fume inside. *Don’t let this guy get to you! Keep your childish desires in check and try to win for once, girl!*

“Alright, loser,” Katsuki said. “You want to force my hand? Fine. I’ll make you regret this! You don’t

have any hand at all, and only 2000 life points."

Toragami's eyes widened. "Could she be…"

"Toragami-sama?" Aino asked.

"I'm going to be a duelist to match you today, Walker-kun," Katsuki said. "I activate from my hand… 'Lightning Vortex'!"

Mark blinked. "'Walker-kun'?"

"I'll discard one card from my hand, and destroy all monsters on your side of the field," Katsuki said, putting 'Magic Shard Excavation' into her cemetery slot. "That means Oceanus is…"

"…Destroyed," Mark completed her thought.

Lightning bolts criss-crossed on Mark's field. Oceanus roared as one struck him and he was destroyed.

"So what?" Isabel moaned. "That's another card that only the elite have access to."

"But not Katsuki-san herself," Toragami reminded her. "She could have gotten 'Court of the Allure Queen', that treasure from her parents, back in her hand. Instead, she's decided to play to win.

You've changed, Katsuki-san. You're starting to mature."

"And now, I'll summon the monster 'Regulus' in attack mode," Katsuki said, putting the card on her Duel Disk. A white lion with shimmering armor jumped out from the card image and roared.

**Regulus** — *LV4 Light Beast (1700 ATK)*

"Regulus, direct attack on the player!" Katsuki ordered as Regulus pounced Mark with a scratch across the chest. Mark staggered backward, his face showing surprise.

**Mark** — *2000 LP — 1700 = 300 LP*

A few students paused as Katsuki appeared to make a turnaround.

"Turn end," Katsuki said flatly.

"Wow," Chiba said. "She's not using Regulus' effect? Maybe she *is* trying to play like a real duelist."

*That card, "Court of the Allure Queen", won't help you now, Katsuki-san*, Toragami thought as she closed her eyes. *It was a smart move to not use "Regulus"' effect, but you still cannot win. You're*

*taking destiny into your own hands, but will your belief in yourself serve you?*

---

“I don’t understand,” Tenjouin admitted. “Darkness against light? I thought it was light fighting against the darkness.”

Kiyotaki shook his head. “Darkness initiated this conflict. You see, light does in fact have destructive capacities, but this was part of the natural life cycle. Once man became aware of his own life, he naturally wanted to hang on to it. As you recall, I characterized darkness as ‘life’ and light as ‘death’.”

“You did, but that makes even less sense.”

Kiyotaki crossed his hands in front of his face. “What if I told you that a human being has the potential within it for immortality? Eternal life?”

“That’s not possible,” Tenjouin replied. “Every being with life dies one day. The resources in this planet are limited; if a being with eternal life appeared, it would one day find itself on a planet inhospitable for it to exist, and would die nevertheless.”

“So it’s less a matter of the human being not being capable of living forever, but for the environment in which he lives in?”

“Well, even that hypothetical aside, we’ve been medically unable to preserve a human in youth and health forever,” Tenjouin replied. “It may not be possible. Even someone who lives his or her life in the most medically sound way possible will still grow old and die. But you’re not helping me understand!”

“It is true that the light is called the ‘Light of Ruin’… it brings ruin to the past and to the old ways of life, and opens up the way to the future,” Kiyotaki ruminated. “However, as you are well aware, it cuts a path of ruin and regret in its wake. That is why darkness is necessary. However, ‘Darkness’ in and of itself is cold and logical, and sees only future death in present life.”

Tenjouin gasped as she put two and two together. “You mean…?”

“Very sharp, as expected of Tenjouin Asuka. The man you fought claimed to come from the Illuminati, but he was in fact an agent of darkness.”

Tenjouin got up, indignant. “Are you saying that Shougo-kun is trying to kill himself?”

“No, he’s not trying to kill himself,” Kiyotaki replied. “Darkness has more facets than you know. It does not merely exist as the enemy that your friend fought fifteen years ago. It lives in the doubt of mankind. ‘Your ideals are fine, but how will they help me make a living?’ ‘I can believe in love, but that won’t bring me victory.’ ‘I know what I do is wrong, but it’s the only way I can support my family.’ These and other thoughts are what support the darkness. Light, on the other hand, has no thoughts. It merely pushes forward to the future.”

“‘Illuminati’… do you mean…?”

“Yes, Tenjouin-san?”

Tenjouin narrowed her eyes. “Do you mean you serve that Light…?”

“No, we do not,” Kiyotaki said. “We are merely humans who are aware of the Light. Tenjouin-san, I am 39 years old and I have a good thirty years of life ahead of me. I wish to use the time I have left to help the next generation find a more peaceful way of life. To do this, we must find a path that allows both sides to live in harmony. Both the darkness and the

light can exist in the same world together. In fact, they must or the end result will be the same."

"But what about Heinrich Wright? Whether or not he serves the true motivations of Illuminati, the fact remains that there are people who are trying to kill Shougo-kun!"

"Yes, it would appear that the ideals I'd dreamt of serving for as long as I have were in fact illusions… but I never thought they'd stoop so low as to try to kill a child."

Tenjouin blinked. "That reminds me… Kiyotaki-kouchou… Toragami-san is the one who knew where Shougo-kun was. That means…"

"Because of Toragami-san's duel with Judai-kun, her connection to the Light is public knowledge now," Kiyotaki said. "But the degree of control she has over it is remarkable. For her to assist the Light's sworn enemy…"

"Shougo-kun," Tenjouin murmured, suddenly remembering. "I need to be protecting him! I've been wasting my time here seeking the truth when he needs me…"

"I have Ayukawa-san in charge of watching him," Kiyotaki replied. "He'll be fine. Tenjouin-san, you

cannot watch over the boy at all times every day. Someday he'll have to fight his own battles."

"He's not even well enough to stand up right now!" Tenjouin shot back. "I can't believe you! Run this school however you like, Kiyotaki-san, but I have my own duties!" She stalked off, hurrying to the medical center.

*I knew you wouldn't take the truth well, Tenjouin-san,* Kiyotaki said as he opened his shades and sat back down. *But I thought you'd at least be ready to hear it. I'm disappointed…*

---

Mark frowned. "I'm not gonna lose to you," he said. "My turn, draw! 'Pot of Greed', activate!"

He drew two cards and smirked. "Sorry, princess, but I'm going to finish this now," he said. "'Raise Dead', activate! I'll revive 'Warrior of Atlantis' from the cemetery."

**Warrior of Atlantis** *(1900 ATK + 200 = 2100 ATK)*

"Why not revive Oceanus?" Chiba wondered. "He summoned him successfully, so he should be able to…"

“Because the other card in his hand…” Isabel said.

“I sacrifice Warrior for ‘Levia-Dragon — Daedalus’,” Mark said. “Remember this puppy?”

The warrior shimmered away as the large sea-serpent came onto the field.

**Levia-Dragon — Daedalus** — *LV7 Water Sea-Serpent (2600 ATK + 200 = 2800 ATK)*

“By sending my field magic to the graveyard, Levia will destroy all other cards on the field,” Mark said. “I’m tired of this charade, so I’m simply going to end it now. Levia Destruction!”

The dragon roared as the Atlantis field spell swirled into water in its mouth which it spat at Regulus. Regulus’ image shattered.

**Levia-Dragon — Daedalus** *(2800 ATK — 200 = 2600 ATK)*

“You think I’ll forgive you that easily, Katsuki-san? After all the trouble you put me through?” Mark said. “Forget it. You started this, but I’m gonna finish it. Levia-Dragon, attack the player directly!”

Katsuki just looked down to the ground as Levia-Dragon's attack struck her dead-on.

**Katsuki** — *2400 LP — 2600 = 0 LP*

"So much for an exciting match," Isabel said, walking to Mark. "It was a boring way to finish, but a win is a win. Looks like you're in the finals now."

Mark nodded, and turned away, although as he walked with Isabel, he gave a curious glance to Katsuki. He then went to the technical office with Isabel without saying another word.

"Katsuki-san," Toragami said sternly.

Katsuki looked down and blushed. "I… I'm sorry I…"

"You grew today, Katsuki-san," Toragami said, her voice changing tone. "That boy doesn't yet understand the price of victory. He will eventually. And I know you will achieve your dream."

"Toragami-san…"

Toragami had yet to smile, though. "You will be a duelist one day," she said, and left Katsuki with her own thoughts.

"Wait, where are you going?" Mizuno protested.

“I’ll be your opponent,” Aino said, raising her Duel Disk. “If you want to follow through on *your* dream, I will be the one to return you to sleep.”

“Fine then, let’s go!” Mizuno turned on her own Duel Disk.

But Toragami stopped Aino.

“You have other opponents that you can defeat,” she told her friend. “I’ll take my final Star point from this girl as a reward for entertaining me.”

“Are you sure, Toragami-san?”

Toragami nodded. “You don’t have a lot of time. Go.”

“You’ve made me a very happy girl, Toragami-sama,” Mizuno said. “I’m already in my dream now!”

“Be sure to remember these moves while you waste in the hell of defeat,” Toragami murmured.

“I’m sure I’ll always remember the masterful actions of Toragami-sama proving her a perfect *seme*!” Mizuno cried out.

“*Seme*?” Mark asked.

Isabel touched Mark's shoulder. "You're 25 years too soon to understand that," she sighed.

As Toragami activated her own Duel Disk, her thoughts were scattered. *Katsuki-san didn't take the action I thought she would. The presence of Darkness is coloring my vision… I can't allow this. But this is the only way I know how to clear my mind. Aoyama Shougo… don't die yet.*

Chiba glanced at the sun as it sank over the horizon. *I better find an opponent before this day is done,* he thought to himself. He looked over in Almaz' direction, but his fellow Osiris wasn't there.

"Almaz-san?" Chiba said aloud.

---

Ayukawa was taking time off from watching Shougo to get some much needed rest, and a student nurse was supposed to be supervising Shougo. But she was doing things of her own, chatting with a friend on a cell phone. She had turned the lights off because Shougo said they bothered him, and he had fallen asleep himself.

A young person, concealed by the shadow, walked into the room. Steadfast and without

hesitation, he held a short knife over Shougo's sleeping body.

"Zadkiel… Raphael… Azrael… I now release Aoyama Shougo to you. May God have mercy on your soul!"

He raised his dirk to attack Shougo's sleeping body, but his wrist was grabbed hard by someone from behind. "Ow! Who dares?" he shouted, as his weapon clattered to the foor.

It was Osiris headmistress Mayako Matsutani.

"You better start worrying about your own soul, kid," she said. "Before you go worrying about others."

"Shougo-kun?" Tenjouin walked into the medical center and heard the commotion. She ran into Shougo's room and turned on the lights.

Shougo's would-be killer was Almaz Wright.

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Regulus"***
Level 4 light beast, attack power 1700, defense power 1000. Once per turn, you can add a field magic card in your cemetery back to your deck. The

reason Katsuki-san carries this card is obvious, but she used its sheer power to free herself from her childlike mannerisms. I wonder what her future deck will be like?

---

***Tenjouin:*** *"No!… As far as we've come to protect Shougo-kun, it seems it was all for nothing."*
***Aino:*** *"As the Genex elimination rounds come to a close, Almaz Wright's suspension seems certain, but Tenjouin-sensei must know how a boy would be so brainwashed as to be willing to perpetrate the sins of his fathers."*
***Chiba:*** *"Almaz-san was capable of such a thing? I can't believe it."*
***Aino:*** *"She looks into the boy's eyes and sees, like she saw in Aoyama-kun, the spirit of a duelist; and so, hoping to understand him better, decides to duel him."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"I need to set aside my sympathy and play to the best of my ability. I will see the true motivation here, and get through to you like I did with Shougo-kun!"*
***Aino:*** *"Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Elimination Rounds Complete! The Pitiless Duel, Tenjouin vs. Almaz'****. Please enjoy."*

***Shougo:*** *"Sorry to everyone who was hoping for me to pull through somehow… life isn't always easy for the main character!"*

---

**CARDS USED BY SHIHO KATSUKI:**

**ALLURE QUEEN LEVEL 3**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Spellcaster, 500/500)*
Once per turn, during your Main Phase 1, you can select 1 Level 3 or lower monster on your opponent's side of the field, and equip it to this card. (Only 1 card at a time can be equipped due to this effect.) If this card would be destroyed as a result of battle, this card is destroyed instead. During your Standby Phase, by sending this card to the cemetery while it's equipped due to its effect, Special Summon 1 "Allure Queen Level 5" from your hand or deck.

**LIGHTNING VORTEX**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 card from your hand to activate. Destroy all face-up monsters on your opponent's side of the field.

**MAGIC SHARD EXCAVATION** *(TCG name: Magical Stone Excavation)*

*Normal Magic*
Discard 2 cards from your hand to activate. Add 1 Magic card in your cemetery to your hand.

**REGULUS**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Beast, 1700/1000)*
Once per turn, select 1 Field Magic card in your cemetery and shuffle it into your deck.

---

**CARDS USED BY MARK WALKER:**

**OCEANUS, THE GUARDIAN OF ATLANTIS** *( "Negative Zero" original card)*
*Effect Monster (LV9 Water Warrior, 3800/3600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This card can only be Special Summoned by sending "Warrior of Atlantis", 'Defender of Atlantis' and "Imperial of Atlantis" from your hand or field to the cemetery while "Legendary City Atlantis" is on the field. While this monster is on the field, "Legendary City Atlantis" may not be removed from the field by your opponent. If "Warrior of Atlantis", "Defender of Atlantis" and "Imperial of Atlantis" exist in the cemetery, you can offer this card as a Sacrifice to Special Summon these 3 cards to the field.

**LEGENDARY CITY ATLANTIS** *(TCG name: A Legendary Ocean)*
*Field Magic*
This card's name is treated as "Ocean". All Water-attribute monsters gain 200 Attack. Downgrade the level of all Water-attribute monsters in both players' hands and on the field by 1.

**POT OF GREED**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 2 cards from your deck.

**RAISE DEAD** *(TCG name: Monster Reborn)*
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 monster card in either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

**WARRIOR OF ATLANTIS**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Aqua, 1900/1200)*
You can discard this card to the cemetery to add 1 "Legendary City Atlantis" from your deck to your hand.

**LEVIA-DRAGON — DAEDALUS**
*Effect Monster (LV7 Water Sea-Serpent, 2600/1500)*
Send 1 "Ocean" on your side of the field to the cemetery to destroy all cards on the field except this card.

# 32. The Pitiless Duel, Tenjouin vs Almaz

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to PM me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

---

Chiba looked at Shougo's sleeping body.

He had heard about the commotion. Someone had tried to kill Shougo. They wouldn't say who — only that it was a student. The medical office had let Chiba in to see him since they knew he was a friend, but that his visit could only be supervised.

Shougo still held a Star point, since they had been unable to confirm his wishes. Chiba had been unable to secure his final Star point before everyone else. There were seven finalists now, and Shougo had the only stray Star point left.

*I brought my deck in case you wanted to have some duels here for it… but I don't know if you're up to it, Shougo-kun,* Chiba lamented. *Nobody expected this kind of thing to happen…*

"Chiba… Chiba-kun…"

"Shougo-kun!" Chiba jumped to his feet as Shougo woke up. "Are you okay?"

Shougo stirred a bit. "I've been slipping in and out… I think… my Star point."

Chiba frowned a bit. He didn't want to bring up that issue.

"Maybe I'm not in my right mind… but I know I'm slowing up the tournament. Chiba-kun, you can have it."

"What?"

"Have my Star point, Chiba-kun. Take it along with my wishes." He then gave in and returned to sleep.

Chiba sat back down as a night attendant approached. “I’ll have Tenjouin-sensei take care of the Star point,” she said. “Now you should let him rest.”

Chiba looked down at his feet as he walked out. Now he had ten Star points. He was in the finals. An Osiris Red was in the finals. He knew all eyes would be on him.

*I’ll take your Star point… and I’ll represent your wishes, Shougo-kun,* Chiba thought to himself. *And I’ll repay this debt to you. I promise!*

---

***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 32: “Elimination Rounds Complete! The Pitiless Duel, Tenjouin vs. Almaz”***

---

As the sun set over Duel Academy Island, the lead teachers were convened in Kiyotaki’s office discussing the events of tomorrow.

“It looks like the elimination rounds are done,” Abe said, checking his PDA. “Eight students have now registered with the technological office.”

“I see,” Kiyotaki said. “Then there’s only one matter left before we conclude this day.”

Tenjouin rubbed her chin momentarily, looking down.

“Do you have a thought you’d like to share, Tenjouin-san?” Kiyotaki asked.

“Before you decide what punishment to hand down,” Tenjouin said. “I’d like to see him.”

Abe crossed his arms and frowned, but said nothing. Matsutani looked as though she knew this was coming.

Kiyotaki nodded. “I suppose that’s fair,” he said. “After all the trouble I’ve put you in, I guess that is the least I could do. Very well, Tenjouin-san; I’ll leave Almaz-kun’s fate to you.”

Tenjouin blinked. She expected more of a fight on this issue, if not from Kiyotaki then from the other dorm headmasters. But she decided it best not to question the fortuitude of the situation. She headed to the detention center.

Kiyotaki nodded to Matsutani and Abe, who left to their own duties. He then took out his cell phone and called Ayukawa.

“Yes, Kiyotaki-sama?” she answered.

“Does Aoyama-kun know that an attempt on his life was made?”

“No, I’ve made sure of it, as you’ve said.”

“Thank you, Ayukawa-san. It’s good to know I can count on you. Tenjouin-san has decided to see the boy, as I’ve suspected. She will probably want to duel him. Just keep Aoyama-kun comfortable, and keep working on his case.”

“Yes, Kiyotaki-sama.”

Kiyotaki hung up on the phone and sat down on his chair. Despite his calm demeanor, he was starting to experience a headache.

“Your plan is going better than you had hoped,” a voice in the shadows said. It was Tahuru. “Why all the stress?”

“The Illuminati are being reckless,” Kiyotaki sighed. “I expected Almaz Wright to compete in the tournament and to make it to the finals, but Aoyama-kun’s roommate defeated him. For Heinrich-san to go this far… it disgusts me. That’s the only reason I permitted Tenjouin-san to do this.”

"*Disgusts* you?" Tahuru seemed bemused. "Do you have the time to feel such emotions in a time of crisis like this?"

"I'm still human," Kiyotaki sighed. "Which is more than I can say of some of my so-called comrades. Present company excluded, of course."

"Of course."

"Tahuru-san, your support of Tenjouin-san would be helpful on this occasion," Kiyotaki said after leaning forward on his desk. "Almaz-san's strength of will… excuse me, Heinrich-san's… is formidable."

"I would never consider not supporting her," Tahuru said, adjusting his glasses. "She's an important person in my life."

Kiyotaki smiled. "Thank you, Tahuru-san," he said. "You should return to your duties as well."

"Of course." Tahuru smiled as well, then walked out of the room.

*Of course, my worst fear is that the most fanatic members may actually be correct,* Kiyotaki thought as he continued to massage his temples. *Is it possible that that boy's existence means the end of*

*the world? And if that's true… am I wrong to help him?*

He shook his head. *No… pawn or not, that boy is still a child, and I must do my best, like Tenjouin-san, to keep him safe. I've already failed too many times… I have to carry through with my own mission now. We will find the balance this world needs to survive… I'm sure of it.*

---

Toragami was walking through the Obelisk Blue campus grounds to her room. Sleep was always a tedious task to her, but after the day's events, it was required.

Katsuki ran alongside to meet her. "Toragami-sama, have you heard?" she asked.

Toragami closed her eyes. "You should know me better than that, Katsuki-san," she said. "Aino-san qualified for the finals."

"Aren't you worried?" Katsuki asked. "What if you have to fight her?"

"Let me worry about that," Toragami replied. "You have matters of your own to attend to, don't you?"

“I do?” Katsuki blinked.

“You’re already thinking about it… making a new deck, that is,” Toragami said. “You should stop feeling like you have duties towards me or Aino-san that you’re not already fulfilling. Like Aino-san said earlier, you and her are my friends. I know you’ll do your best to help me. Now is the time to help yourself.”

“I…” Katsuki cast her eyes to the ground.

Toragami stopped walking and turned to Katsuki. “It’s difficult for someone like you who doesn’t enjoy fighting,” she said. “I know this very well. But the important thing is to put your best effort into it, to stand on your own. We have so very little time.”

“I don’t understand your words,” Katsuki admitted. “But, I’ll do my best. You know what’s best for yourself, Toragami-sama! I’ll go back to my room, then.”

She then ran off.

Toragami stifled a smile when she watched her go. *I’ve come too far to lose control of my emotions now,* she thought to herself as she returned to her room.

---

Almaz was being held in a cell at the campus' detention center. His deck and belongings were brought there, but he was on a strict observation cycle. The plan was to return him to Honshu in the morning to face juvenile manslaughter charges, and based on his testimony, charge Heinrich Wright with child endangerment.

Asuka Tenjouin arrived and was let into his cell room under observation.

"Almaz-kun," she said simply as a greeting.

"Frau Tenjouin?" Almaz said, looking up briefly. "Are you going to ask an explanation for what I've done? I already told the kind officer. I don't have anything else to say."

"I don't believe you were in control of your actions," Tenjouin replied. "I've pulled a lot of strings to get my superior to understand that. He's put your fate in my hands."

Almaz stared at Tenjouin with a morose expression, then looked back down.

"Listen, this is what I'm going to offer you," Tenjouin said. "We have to test the Duel Arena that

we’re having for the finals. So tonight, while the other students are asleep, you and I will duel.”

Almaz gave a cursory glance to his deck. “If I win, you will forget about what I did?”

“That’s not possible, Almaz-kun,” Tenjouin said with a shake of his head. “I will, however, assert that you are not sound of mind, and that you require a psychological examination. In short, we won’t remand you to the Japanese authorities.”

“Interesting, Frau Tenjouin,” Almaz said, and then gave a sigh. “If an Osiris Red like me defeats the Obelisk Blue professor, it will indicate that I’m mentally insane.”

“I remember reading that during your examination, you were very nervous,” Tenjouin said. “Perhaps we haven’t seen your true potential. I see in your eyes the spirit of a duelist, who is very conflicted.”

She paused, then leaned against the wall of the room.

“I met your father.”

Almaz’ eyes widened. “Heinrich-dono came here?” he asked, his voice shaky with palpable fear.

“Why?”

Tenjouin blinked. “You call him ‘Heinrich-dono’?” She sighed. “It’s as I feared…”

“As you feared?”

Tenjouin shook her head and then called for the warden to open the door. “They’ll call you when it’s time and bring you to the Duel Arena,” she said. “You should rest until then.”

The door opened, and the professor walked out. She felt a sick feeling grow in her stomach as she refected on the conversation she just had. *‘Heinrich-dono’? I knew it… his father had been pressuring him. Perhaps Almaz-kun only came here to get close to Aoyama-kun? If that’s the case… this ‘Illuminati’ must have known Aoyama-kun was Darkness from the beginning.*

*What exactly have I stumbled upon?*

---

In her room at the Ra Yellow dorms, Isabel Suárez was dwelling on restless thoughts.

She looked at the deck she had used during the Genex tournament. It was the same deck she’d used

against Shougo that fateful day — the Flame Spirit Ignis deck. It'd served her well during the Genex elimination rounds; or perhaps it was just Isabel's luck that favored her? After all, she knew that her deck wasn't all that strong, and nobody else was exactly playing to lose.

*In any case, I've been preparing for this day…*

Isabel walked up to her drawer and Isabel walked up to her dresser and opened the bottom drawer to take what was enshrined there; the comingling scents of leather and silk greeting her. Taking up the deck case, the arm band dangling, she opened it and checked the cloth-wrapped deck inside it, before closing the case again and strapping it to her right upper arm.

*Mamá, it's been too long since I felt this serious.*

She took the card off the top of the deck and looked at it, then replaced it in its original location, and returned the deck to its proper place.

In another room, Mark was examining his own deck. He'd pondered if he'd made a mistake revealing his trumps in the elimination rounds, but a voice in his head reassured him this was for the best.

After all, hiding your strongest moves was not behavior befitting a champion, right?

Still, as Mark glanced over his cards, he was hit with the realization that he hadn't used his true ace yet. *That card that I worked hard to obtain… I haven't seen its true potential yet,* he said. *I guess it's kind of a miracle that I've been able to get this far without having to. That should make the finals interesting.*

He knew Isabel was in the finals, and there was no way that Toragami would not be there, either. But he wondered who else would be potential opponents…

---

"Almaz Wright is here," the Duel Academy student guards said.

Tenjouin nodded. "Just watch him as he gets on the platform," she said.

Kiyotaki, Abe and Matsutani observed the duel from a one-way window. "I wonder if Tenjouin-san has prepared herself for this duel," Abe said. "Certainly she knows what she's up against."

“I don’t know,” Matsutani responded. “She seems to be the type to stick with her deck no matter what.”

“In any case, we’ll get a good test of this Duel Arena before the finals tomorrow evening,” Kiyotaki said. “It was a good opportunity, as Tenjouin-san said.”

*And perhaps I can get to the bottom of Heinrich Wright’s insubordination through Almaz-kun’s duel,* he thought to himself, but he showed no visible signs of having a separate thought.

Tenjouin paused to regard the technology of the Duel Arena as she stepped onto the platform.

It was a throwback to the Duelist Kingdom era of dueling, when Duel Disks were not common. The players set their decks onto a computerized table, and placed their cards on an image generator. The hologram would then appear on the large field between them.

“Duel!”

**Tenjouin** — *4000 LP*
**Almaz** — *4000 LP*

“‘Dice Roll’,” a background voice called. The flashing lights of the image of dice blinked rapidly

on the monitor behind them. The final result: Almaz rolled a 2, while Tenjouin's result was a 3.

Tenjouin took in a breath. "The advantage goes to the one who starts," she said. "I don't want to put you at a disadvantage, Almaz-kun, but it would be an insult to underestimate you, so I'll start." She put a hand on her wrist, but forgot she wasn't wearing a Duel Disk. *It's going to be interesting to get used to dueling this way again.*

But as she put her hand on her deck to draw a card, Almaz said something which surprised her.

"Don't bother with pleasantries, Frau Tenjouin," he said, drawing his hand. "We both know I'm a terrible duelist."

Tenjouin's eyes widened. "Almaz-kun, please," she said as she drew her own six cards. "Don't put yourself down like that."

"It's the truth," Almaz replied. "Do you think I'd believe you would let me get away with my crime? I am prepared for the worst."

"In that case, why agree to this duel?" Tenjouin asked as her eyes drifted from her opponent to her hand.

“Perhaps I wanted one moment doing something I enjoy before my life ends.” Almaz’ face looked so downtrodden, eyes not even on his hand, just to the ground.

“Your life isn’t over yet,” Tenjouin said. “It hasn’t even begun… other people have toyed with your mind, but that ends now! For my turn, I’ll summon ‘Blade Skater’ in defense mode.”

Tenjouin placed the card on the table in front of her. The image of the card appeared on the field as a large hologram and, amid sparks of light, Blade Skater twirled onto the field, larger than she’d ever appeared before. She placed her bladed arms in front of her in a defensive posture.

**Blade Skater** — *LV4 Earth Warrior (1500 DEF)*

“And I’ll set a card to end my turn,” Tenjouin said, as another holographic image of a card appeared on the field.

“It is my turn, then,” Almaz said.

“Wait,” Tenjouin said as Almaz took his card. “Before you start your turn, I have a question.”

“I do not have to answer any of your questions,” Almaz said. His tone sounded different from his

usual form of speech.

“You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to,” Tenjouin said. “But just listen to it at least.”

Almaz took the drawn card into his hand and then nodded without saying anything.

Tenjouin closed her eyes. She knew Kiyotaki, Matsutani and Abe were watching, and what she was risking. She then opened them again.

“Did you know that Aoyama Shougo was Darkness?”

Kiyotaki’s eyes widened. *Tenjouin-san.…*

“‘Darkness’?” Abe asked. “What is she talking about?”

Matsutani scratched her ear. “I’m curious as to his response in any case,” she said.

Almaz clenched his free hand, making his knuckles white. He then let go, and proceeded with his turn as if he had not heard her. “I activate ‘Hand Obliteration’,” Almaz said. “I apologize, Frau Tenjouin, but you have to discard your hand and draw the same number of cards you send to the cemetery. I must do the same.”

Tenjouin sighed. *I talked so much of underestimating him, and yet here I am doing it, forgetting I'm up against an undead deck user.* She placed her cards into the cemetery: "Fusion Recovery", 'Hail Cyber', "Instant Freezing" and "Blue Ice White Nights Dragon". "Instant Freezing" could have been helpful to her; she wished she had placed it face-down.

Tenjouin then drew four cards, and hit a button on her terminal to confirm the cards Almaz discarded: 2 "Wights", 'Reward of Rebirth', "Magical Thorn" and "Necro Gardna". *"Necro Gardna" in the cemetery is hard for me, but those two "Wight" s may be more troublesome. And "Reward of Rebirth"? Why didn't he play that cards first? Unless he's digging for something…*

"I activate 'Foolish Burial' now," Almaz declared. "I select any monster in my deck and send it to the cemetery, and I choose 'Wight'!"

*As I thought,* Tenjouin said. *He's planning to play "Wight King". But did he draw it?*

Almaz answered Tenjouin's thought. "I summon 'Wight King' in attack mode!"

A smoke filled the field where the card came from, and out of it came a cloak. When the cloak rose to its full height, skeletal arms emerged from its side and a skull came out of its top. The black smoke cleared away from the bottom of the field to reveal a pile of bones.

**Wight King** — *LV1 Dark Undead (? ATK)*

“Certainly an old fashioned technique,” Abe said. “But Osiris duelists do well with cards like that, isn’t that right, Matsutani-san?”

“Yes, but I’m afraid for what that means for Tenjouin-san,” Matsutani said. “Because Wight King’s power is a fearsome one, and her assault may be constrained.”

“Wight King’s attack power is equal to the number of ‘Wight’ cards in my cemetery times one thousand, Frau Tenjouin,” Almaz said. “And I have three.”

The skeletal figure roared as it seemed to draw on the power of the Wight cards.

**Wight King** —? *ATK = 3000 ATK*

“Wight King, destroy Frau Tenjouin’s Blade Skater!” Almaz commanded.

Wight King raised its arm and fired a blast of dark energy at Blade Skater. She resisted it for a moment, but it quickly overwhelmed her.

“As for your question, Frau Tenjouin, I learned a long time ago that this world was doomed,” Almaz said after the Wight King ceased his attack. “Heinrich-dono sent me here as an agent to find the one who would lead this world to doom, and to draw out all of his power in a duel, so that there would be no question of who he was. But I failed in that mission!”

“You are *not* an agent!” Tenjouin shouted. “You’re a child, and you’re free to choose your path in life.”

“You are wrong, Frau Tenjouin,” Almaz said, with a shake of his head. “Children are the slaves of their parents. We are created by them to achieve their legacies. And we have a duty to hold the memory of God as a banner to all who would stand against Him! But I failed in that task.”

He looked off to the side. “Aoyama-kun had a friend. *A friend.* He defeated me. How could the source of all evil in the world have a *friend*? I did not understand this. As I did not understand the impulse that forced me to Aoyama-kun’s bedside.”

“Almaz-kun…”

“Still… as a duelist, I can at least do my best here, as you request,” Almaz said, finally looking his teacher in the eye. “And I’ll demonstrate that memory by defeating you. Then perhaps, you can understand that Heinrich-dono was trying to save you all! I set one card and end my turn.”

Tenjouin frowned deeply as she prepared to draw her next card.

*I see a boy with conflicted allegiances. He wants to achieve the goals of his father, but he’s starting to see how flawed they are. Can this duel really convey my emotions to him? I cannot pity this boy, though… otherwise I will not duel my best. That’s what I must do, right?*

*But he is so fragile, though…* Tenjouin shook her head. *No! I cannot make the same mistake as I did with Aoyama-kun! I will not pity the boy. I will do my best in this duel, and have faith in the future, just like Judai-kun. And then… surely…*

---

**TODAY’S FEATURED CARD: *“Wight King”***
Level 1 dark undead, attack power unknown,

defense power 0. This card's attack points are equal to the number of "Wight" and 'Wight King' cards in your cemetery. If it's destroyed in battle, remove another "Wight" card to revive it. Its power can be raised quicky by intentionally sending "Wight" cards to your cemetery. It represents both the power and the horror of tradition.

---

***Aino:*** *"The duel between Tenjouin-sensei and Almaz-kun is underway."*
***Chiba:*** *"I can't believe it. Almaz-san would do such a thing? Not on his own…"*
***Shougo:*** *"So I'm supposed to not know about any of this, right?"*
***Aino:*** *"Tenjouin-sensei duels her best, and as the path to victory becomes clearer, she is forced to ask herself difficult questions."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"Duels are just combat, aren't they? Maybe it's a world like this… perhaps he and I are not so different."*
***Aino:*** *"Faith and belief is shaken, and the virtue of victory is tested, next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Sins of the Fathers, Even Unto the Seventh Generation'****. Please enjoy."*
***Toragami:*** *"This world of the relative is based upon*

*victory and defeat. Tenjouin-sama, please carry through to victory! Don't let that organization shake that ideal."*

---

**CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:**

**BLADE SKATER**
*Normal Monster (LV4 Earth Warrior, 1400/1500)*
*An image of beauty on the ice, this gorgeous warrior rips her opponents into pieces with her stylish Accel Slicer attack.*

**FUSION RECOVERY**
*Normal Magic*
Add 1 "Fusion" and 1 Fusion Material Monster that was used for a Fusion Summon to your hand from the cemetery.

**HAIL CYBER** *(note: manga exclusive card. Its English name is "Cyber Valkyrie".)*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Water Warrior, 1300/1500)*
Decrease the Attack points of a monster attacking this card by 300.

**INSTANT FREEZING** *(note: manga exclusive card. Its English name is "Instant Freeze".)*
*Instant Magic*

Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card and flip it facedown. That card cannot be activated until the third End Phase after the activation of this card.

**BLUE ICE WHITE NIGHTS DRAGON** *(TCG name: White Night Dragon)*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Water Dragon, 3000/2500)*
Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card that targets this card and destroy it. When a face-up Monster you control is selected as an attack target, by sending one face-up Magic or Trap card you control to the cemetery, change the attack target to this card.

---

**CARDS USED BY ALMAZ WRIGHT:**

**HAND OBLITERATION** *(TCG name: Card Destruction)*
*Normal Magic*
Each player discards their hand and draws the same number of cards they discarded.

**WIGHT** *(TCG name: Skull Servant)*
*Normal Monster (LV1 Dark Undead, 300/200)*
*A skeletal ghost that isn't very strong, but can get serious in large numbers.*

**REWARD OF REBIRTH** *(TCG name: Card of Safe Return)*
*Continuous Magic*
When a monster is Special Summoned to the field from your cemetery, you can draw 1 card.

**MAGICAL THORN**
*Normal Trap*
Each time your opponent's card(s) are discarded to the cemetery, inflict 500 points of damage to their Life Points for each card that was discarded.

**NECRO GARDNA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Warrior, 600/1300)*
Remove this card in your cemetery from play to negate 1 attack this turn from a monster your opponent controls.

**FOOLISH BURIAL**
*Normal Magic*
Send 1 Monster Card from your deck to the cemetery.

**WIGHT KING** *(TCG name: King of the Skull Servants)*
*Effect Monster (LV1 Dark Undead,?/0)*
The original attack points of this card becomes the number of "Wight" s and 'Wight King "s in your cemetery x 1000. When this card is destroyed by

battle and sent to the cemetery, by removing in your cemetery 1" Wight' or "Wight King" other than this card from play, Special Summon this card.

# 33. The Sins of the Fathers

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---

In the Duel Arena being tested for the morning's Genex finals…

"I learned a long time ago that this world was doomed," Almaz Wright said; his field consisted of a 3000-ATK 'Wight King'. "Heinrich-dono sent me here as an agent to find the one who would lead this world to doom, and to draw out all of his power in a duel, so that there would be no question of who he was. But I failed in that mission!"

“You are *not* an agent!” Tenjouin shouted. “You’re a child, and you’re free to choose your path in life.”

“You are wrong, Frau Tenjouin,” Almaz said, with a shake of his head. “Children are the slaves of their parents. We are created by them to achieve their legacies. And we have a duty to hold the memory of God as a banner to all who would stand against Him! But I failed in that task.”

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“Almaz-kun…”

“Still… as a duelist, I can at least do my best here, as you request,” Almaz said, finally looking his teacher in the eye. “And I’ll demonstrate that memory by defeating you. Then perhaps, you can understand that Heinrich-dono was trying to save you all! I set one card and end my turn.”

Tenjouin frowned deeply as she prepared to draw her next card.

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 33: "The Sins of the Fathers, Even Unto the Seventh Generation…"***

---

Katsuki wasn't able to sleep. Instead, she was looking at her card collection. It was an impressive one, but nevertheless limited, as she'd never had reason to keep cards that didn't assist her "Allure Queen" strategy.

Now, she felt forced to come up with something that could win, but kept coming back to "Court" like a crutch. *A crutch,* she thought to herself. *That's exactly what it is. It helped me when I wasn't able to walk on my own, but now that I am able to, I really should cast it aside. After all, a crutch is pointless when you can walk..*

*…Unless you are simply too lazy to…*

Katsuki took her "Court of the Allure Queen" and, moved by a strange emotion she didn't understand, kissed it. 'Thank you very much,' she said respectfully. "You've helped me through a hard time, but now I have to put you away."

She took a case that she had bought some time ago. It had looked so beautiful when she first saw it that she bought it with the intent of putting something very valuable in it, but she'd never really encountered anything of more value to her than that box itself.

Until now…

"*Sayonara, Shiho-chan,*" she said to herself as she reverently placed the card in the case. She then clapped twice and bowed her head for a few moments, before putting the box in her dresser drawer.

Her thoughts were restless again, and she got to work building the rudimentaries for her new deck.

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**Tenjouin** — *4000 LP*
**Almaz** — *4000 LP*

Tenjouin put her hand on her deck. "My turn… draw! And I reveal my reverse card, 'Cry of the Living Dead'!"

Kiyotaki smiled. "We're going to see a show now, I'm sure," he said.

Matsutani and Abe both nodded. They had been paying attention to the cemetery, too.

“I can revive one monster from my cemetery in attack position!” Tenjouin said. “And the monster I choose is the unrivaled master of water and ice!”

“You mean…” Almaz choked a bit. There was visible fear in his body.

“The monster who secures the future of my students… grace us now with your presence!” Tenjouin shouted, feeling Almaz needed to know how important the monster was to her. “Appear here, ‘Blue Ice White Nights Dragon’!”

A powerful energy erupted on the field as, in front of the ‘Cry of the Living Dead’ card, a puddle of cold water appeared on the ground. It then rose to the field, mildly resembling a bubble, before droplet started falling away from it. As if emerging as a sculpture, the White Nights Dragon took shape, and then roared menacingly.

**Blue Ice White Nights Dragon** — *LV8 Water Dragon (3000 ATK)*

When Almaz recovered from his awe, he was able to grip the situation. “That is a powerful dragon,” he admitted. “But it will only be able to kill

itself in a battle with Wight King. And I'll be able to revive it with its special ability, Frau Tenjouin."

"I understand that," Tenjouin said. "Characters don't always appear to play the hero. Sometimes they must sacrifice themselves for a greater cause. I'll show you what I mean. For my normal summon, I play 'Cyber Petit Angel' in defense mode."

A circular cartoonish creature appeared, holding a bow and arrow. It was pink and bore a halo and angel wings.

**Cyber Petit Angel** — *LV1 Light Angel (200 DEF)*

"When Cyber Petit Angel is summoned, I can add one 'Machine Angel Ritual' from my deck to my hand," Tenjouin went on, spreading her deck before her and taking the card out. "And I will activate it now!"

Almaz blinked. "'Machine Angel Ritual'?"

The dragon that Tenjouin had summoned started to melt, and as it did, Tenjouin showed Almaz a card from her hand. "White Nights Dragon, I now sacrifice you at the altar of the machine goddess! The master of weapons will appear before us once

more! Show yourself before us… ‘Cyber Angel Dakini’!”

Another burst of energy signalled the appearance of a new monster. A blue-skinned woman with four arms, each wielding a different type of weapon; the two upper arms held a scimitar and a sword, the two lower ones both gripped a staff.

**Cyber Angel Dakini** — *LV8 Light Angel (2700 ATK)*

“Why would you sacrifice a stronger monster for a weaker one?” Almaz asked, nonplussed.

“Because Dakini’s special effect lets me destroy a monster on your side of the field when it’s summoned,” Tenjouin explained. “Normally, you would choose the monster, but since you only have one… Dakini, destroy Wight King!”

Dakini threw her swords, which promptly regenerated, at Wight King, who fell apart into shattered bones.

“Battle!” Tenjouin shouted, wasting no time. “Cyber Angel Dakini, attack Almaz-kun directly… Angelic Cut!”

Dakini leaped forward to strike Almaz, and he had a brief moment of panic. He then seemed to remember he had a facedown.

“Reverse card open, ‘Angel Lift’!” Almaz shouted, flipping the card down hard on the electronic table. “I can special summon a Level 2 or lower monster in my cemetery in Attack position. And of course, I choose Wight King!”

The bone pile returned, donning its cloak as it reformed.

**Wight King** *(? ATK)*

“Remember, Frau Tenjouin… Wight King’s attack power is based on the number of ‘Wight’ and ‘Wight King’ cards in my cemetery. And since I still have 3 ’Wight’s, his power is higher than Dakini’s!”

**Wight King** *(? ATK = 3000 ATK)*

Tenjouin bit her lip. *I was hoping to draw out his countermeasure, but I didn’t expect this. Fortunately, I have a plan.*

“Set two cards,” Tenjouin said. “Turn end.”

“My turn, then,” Almaz said, and pulled his card. “I activate ‘Magic Shard Excavation’. By discarding two cards from my hand, I can take a magic card in

my cemetery and return it to me! I discard ‘Mezuki’ and ‘Madame Wight’ to return ‘Reward of Rebirth’ to my hand.”

He put the stated cards in his cemetery pile, while returning the magic card to his hand. “And since ‘Madame Wight’ is treated as ‘Wight’ in the cemetery, my Wight King’s power goes up!”

**Wight King** *(3000 ATK + 1000 = 4000 ATK)*

“Now I’ll activate ‘Reward of Rebirth’ now,” Almaz said. “When a monster is revived from the cemetery, I get to draw one card.”

*If he’s planning what I think he’s planning, I’m in trouble,* Tenjouin thought to herself.

“Battle!”

“What?” Tenjouin gasped in shock out loud.

“Wight King, destroy Cyber Angel Dakini!” Almaz declared as the pile of bones charged against Dakini, who tensed up for a battle.

It wasn’t necessary. “Reverse card open… ‘Doble Passe’!” Tenjouin shouted, flipping the card open. “Your attack on my monster becomes a direct attack on me!”

“Is she insane?” Abe shouted. “Or perhaps she is trying to lose on purpose?”

“You’re forgetting her other facedown,” Kiyotaki pointed out.

Almaz looked visibly confused as well. “Frau Tenjouin, are you trying to send me a message?”

“Yes, I am,” Tenjouin replied. “I’m trying to tell you that you are not alone! Reverse card… chain! ‘Emissaries of Harmony’, activate!”

A group of holy maidens appeared on the field and said prayers as Wight King rushed forward with its punch. It bounced off a magical barrier harmlessly.

“All damage to my monsters and to my life points become 0 this turn,” Tenjouin said. “Plus, the monster you attacked, gets to launch a direct attack on you. Almaz-kun… I’m taking you seriously as a duelist. Understand my strong feelings!”

Cyber Angel Dakini rushed forward, readying her weapons. Almaz felt awed at the sight of her four arms.

“Angelic Cut!” Tenjouin ordered.

But Dakini's attack connected against the shadow of Necro Gardna.

"I activate the effect of 'Necro Gardna'," Almaz said. "By removing it from play, I can negate the attack of an opponent's monster."

Tenjouin clicked her tongue. "Almaz-kun…" she thought to herself quietly.

"But… the damage from 'Doble Passe' is effect damage!" Matsutani shouted. "Why would she let this go? It was a great opportunity."

Kiyotaki sighed and put his hands in his pockets. "You can't change the heart of a person that easily," he said. "Tenjouin-san doesn't want to make Almaz-kun look bad."

"Still, I can't let that stand!" Matsutani went on. "He's pretty much cheating at this point!"

"Just let it go," Abe said, putting a hand on her shoulder. "It's school policy that if one party overlooks the mistake of the other, it's a valid move. We can't confirm that he was actively cheating."

Matsutani felt indignant. "A guy who's willing to kill another, and you're giving him the benefit of the doubt?!"

Kiyotaki looked at Matsutani with a stern expression. “Let’s just let this go, Matsutani-san. We’re not going to make progress by bickering.”

“Almaz-kun, I acknowledge you as a duelist,” Tenjouin said. “But you must understand—”

“I know what you’re trying to do,” Almaz interrupted her. “It won’t work! I am very clear on this! Are you trying to fight me to create a new future for me? No future can be created through fighting! Surely you understand that much?”

Tenjouin gripped her cards as his words shook her. *It feels true to me,* she thought to herself. *As much as I enjoy dueling, I could feel good about it as long as it was just a game. But now… we’re using this game to decide the fate of this world! Is this really the way things should be?*

“My Battle Phase is over,” Almaz went on. “I set one monster facedown to end my turn.”

Tenjouin drew her card as she puzzled over this new feeling. *I’ve fought many battles, and I remember every detail of them,* she thought. *But have I ever thought about the friends I’ve left behind? Junko-san… Momoe-san… I remember*

*their names, but their faces are fading. Have I ever even e-mailed them?*

Dakini glanced at her mistress, seemingly concerned.

“Why is Tenjouin-san acting like this?” Matsutani asked aloud.

“Almaz-san has shaken her beliefs,” Kiyotaki lamented. “He’s awoken her to a truth I had hoped she would not realize yet. It will not help her in this fight.”

Tenjouin touched the rim of her glasses as she recalled the last turn. *If he’d used “Mezuki” to resurrect ‘Madame Wight’, my plan would have been foiled. Plus, he set a defense position monster. Most Undead monsters don’t have much defense, and my “Dakini” does piercing damage. Is he really trying his best?*

She nodded as she gave voice to her own thoughts. *Yes… this is the attitude a duelist should have. This is not the time for self-doubt!*

Tenjouin placed the card she drew on her magic/trap slot. “Instant magic, ‘Cyclone’, activate! I select one magic or trap card on the field and

destroy it. Almaz-kun… I'll destroy your 'Angel Lift' card."

The wind from the card blew across the arena and hit "Angel Lift", shattering it.

"And, along with it, your 'Wight King' is also destroyed," Tenjouin reminded him as the skeletal once again retreated to a pile of bones.

"Next, I'll sacrifice 'Cyber Petit Angel' to summon 'Cyber Prima'," Tenjouin went on as the pink creature faded away. The figure of Cyber Prima was especially stunning in this larger environment; her rotating rings, long swath of white hair, and red mask stood out as she shot energy out of her body.

**Cyber Prima** — *LV6 Light Warrior (2300 ATK)*

"When Cyber Prima is summoned with a sacrifice, I destroy all magic cards on the field," Tenjouin said.

Almaz grunted as his "Reward of Rebirth" card was destroyed.

"Cyber Angel Dakini, attack Almaz-kun's facedown monster with Angelic Cut," Tenjouin went on.

“That hesitation is gone,” Abe noted. “What happened in Tenjouin-san’s head just now?”

“Don’t think her doubts are gone that easily,” Kiyotaki said dourly. “He planted a seed that may take root. Getting rid of it is not a task as simple as merely achieving victory here.”

Dakini’s swords sliced through a pile of bones.

**Soul-Absorbing Bone Tower** — *LV3 Dark Undead (1500 DEF)*

“When Cyber Angel Dakini attacks a defense position monster, you still take damage equal to the difference between its attack points and your defense points,” Tenjouin reminded him.

Almaz nodded quietly.

**Almaz** — *4000 LP — 1200 = 2800 LP*

*No matter what I do, I’m going to take damage this next turn, it looks like,* Tenjouin thought to herself. *I can’t stop him from reviving “Wight King” with “Mezuki”’s effect. But he doesn’t seem to be thinking clearly. Perhaps the stress of the battle’s overwhelmed him?*

“Cyber Prima… direct attack on the player with The Ending’s Reverence,” Tenjouin went on.

Cyber Prima obeyed, spinning beautifully and pausing in front of Almaz. Two well timed slashes and Almaz was shouting with apparent pain, shuddering violently.

**Almaz** *— 2800 LP — 2300 = 500 LP*

“Are you okay, Almaz-kun?” Tenjouin shouted reflexively.

“This is the feeling — this is that feeling I hate!” Almaz spat. “Trying my best and still losing! Heinrich-dono was right… I am a loser. If I don’t kill this feeling, then that’s all I am. I can’t put aside my feelings for the sake of my mission.”

“You’re *not* on a mission!” Tenjouin cried. “You still have a choice!”

“Oh, really?” Almaz shot back. “Did I choose this fate? I can see it on your face — I’ve been making mistakes. But I’m doing the best I can! That doesn’t matter to you, though, does it? You see me as just a misguided boy.”

Tenjouin stepped back with shock as she realized that this boy was very similar to Shougo. They both felt themselves awful at dueling, and perhaps their style reflected that. It’s true that Shougo changed,

but didn’t that come at a risk to him? And now he was in the hospital, sick of this disease, perhaps…

“You know about Darkness,” Tenjouin said, turning her eyes away. “Then you must know that it inflicted despair and misery on the human race. The only way out is to fight on. Not to surrender to that despair.”

Almaz blinked.

*That’s right, Almaz-kun,* Tenjouin thought to herself as she prepared to end her turn. *Times of peace are ideal, but we have to be prepared to fight, no matter what. For what you believe in, and for what I believe in, we stand alone… but we stand together.*

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Mizuno woke up, startled.

*It was that dream again of Toragami-sama,* she thought to herself. *I’m going to be wound up tight for the rest of the night unless I do something.*

She got up out of bed, carefully so as not to wake anyone else up, and opened a drawer that contained several decks.

*My Plasma Cloud deck served me well for the elimination rounds, but now everyone knows I have the "Ultimate D-Card" and are surely preparing for it.*

She then closed the drawer and opened one below it. Along with several leather pieces of equipment was, incongruously, a baseball, which she picked up and threw up and down in her hand several times.

"I think the situation calls for a curveball," she mused aloud.

Meanwhile, another Obelisk Blue was up late doing bokken training. His body showed signs of overexertion and he put the practice weapon down. *'In that sleep of death, what dreams may come'*, he thought to himself. *I shall fall asleep yesterday's Ganryu, but awaken tomorrow's Ganryu.*

Naomi Aino, in the meantime, was not asleep at all. She merely stared out the window of her dorm room.

*I can't pretend to be tired when I'm not… and I can't die when I'm at the prime of my life.*

She thought about the deck she had used in the elimination rounds, and the deck she had decided to use in the finals.

“Hinata-chan, I vow that I’ll return your smile to you in the finals,” she said to no one in particular. “Even if I’m destined to lose to you, I can at least get you to remember it…”

---

“I set one card,” Tenjouin said. “Turn end.”

“My turn…” Almaz said and drew his card. “I activate the effect of ‘Mezuki’, Frau Tenjouin. By removing it from play in the cemetery, I can revive one Undead-type monster in my cemetery.”

*Here it comes.…* Tenjouin thought.

“Be reborn… ‘Madame Wight’!”

“What?” Tenjouin was visibly confused as the skeletal creature with a female wig and dress appeared, sitting on a chair and looking idle.

**Madame Wight** — *LV4 Dark Undead (2200 DEF)*

*Why would he revive a monster with no attack power against two monsters that can defeat it.* She then stifled a gasp. *Unless.…*

“And I summon ‘Wight King’ from my hand in attack position!” Almaz shouted as another pile of bones appeared on the field, with a cloak formed from the darkness.

**Wight King** *(? ATK)*

“And the attack power of ‘Wight King’ is equal to the number of ‘Wight’ and ‘Wight King’ monsters in my cemetery times 1000,” Almaz went on. “With one ‘Wight King’ and three ’Wight’s, that’s 4000!”

**Wight King** *(? ATK = 4000 ATK)*

Almaz then gave a heavy-hearted sigh, before he returned to his mode of aggression. “Wight King, destroy Frau Tenjouin’s Cyber Angel Dakini!”

The skeletal creature rushed Dakini, who dodged the blow and struck back, but only succeeded in cutting off its arm. Wight King uppercutted Dakini with its free arm, destroying it.

Tenjouin shouted as she felt the reverbation of the blow.

**Tenjouin** *— 4000 LP — 1300 = 2700 LP*

“I don’t understand,” Abe pondered. “Why not target the weaker monster?”

“You forgot about Dakini’s penetration effect,” Matsutani reminded her colleague. “If she’d attacked ‘Madame Wight’, Tenjouin-san would have won.”

“I have nothing else to play,” Almaz said. “Turn end.”

*What* is *this feeling?* Tenjouin was lost in thought as she drew her next card. *It’s such a tormented and conflictive feeling I feel inside of me when I look in his eyes. Have I lost sight of my purpose again?*

Her eyes then widened briefly as she recalled what she told Toragami during that Dark Duel…

*“If I forget… remind me.”*

*“I understand. And I will.”*

*Forget about my heart that was scorched by the light?* Tenjouin said as she looked at her hand. *Like Almaz-kun, I have had my mind manipulated… yes. I can accept that. As I have had to accept that Tenjouin Asuka took those actions with the Society of Light, I must also accept that I was not in control. And remember my heart… and use it to reach this boy!*

“My turn… draw.” Tenjouin looked at her hand and field and nodded. “Equip magic, ‘Fulfillment of the Contract’, activate! By paying 800 life points, I can Special Summon a Ritual Monster from my cemetery.”

**Tenjouin** *— 2700 LP — 800 = 1900 LP*

“Of course, I choose ‘Cyber Angel Dakini’!”

The four-armed weapons expert reappeared on the field.

**Cyber Angel Dakini** *(2700 ATK)*

“Cyber Angel Dakini’s special effect activates,” Tenjouin went on. “Almaz-kun, you must select one monster on your side of the field, and that monster is destroyed. ‘Madame Wight’ protects your ‘Wight King’ from magic and trap card effects, but not monster effects. So you must choose.”

“Of course, I choose ‘Madame Wight’!” Almaz shouted as the lady skeleton shattered to pieces. “And because of its effect, Wight King’s strength increases!”

**Wight King** *(4000 ATK + 1000 = 5000 ATK)*

Tenjouin nodded. “Turn end.”

“I see now,” Almaz said. “You’re not taking me seriously, Frau Tenjouin?”

Tenjouin remained silent.

As Almaz drew his card, he frowned. “I hate fighting,” he sulked. “But I like dueling. I guess that makes me some kind of hypocrite. Is that what you’re telling me? Well, I can only play the game by its rules. Life’s the same! Even if you can’t believe in your ideals, the only other choice is death! So I’m going to do what I can! ‘Wight King’, attack ‘Cyber Angel Dakini’!”

Tenjouin sighed. “The warning I gave you, Almaz-kun… do you remember?”

“Warning?”

“I said ‘Madame Wight’ protects your ‘Wight King’ from magic and trap effects, but not monster effects. This duel would have ended the same. Reverse card open… ‘Ice Block’!”

Almaz’ eyes widened as blocks of ice gathered around ‘Wight King’.

“I negate the attack of ‘Wight King’ and change it to defense position,” Tenjouin explained. “And it

cannot declare an attack until the end phase of the next turn."

**Wight King** *(0 DEF)*

Almaz sighed. "I set one card and end my turn," he said.

*I can tell from the look on his face that his set card is a bluff,* Tenjouin said as she drew her next card. *Neither of us want to endure this meaningless battle anymore. Almaz-kun, I will get you the help you need, so you can recover your life!*

"Cyber Angel Dakini, attack Wight King!" Tenjouin ordered. "Angelic Cut!"

Dakini twirled her weapons and hacked the ice-encased Wight King to bits.

"And due to Dakini's effect, you will take 2700 points of damage, Almaz-kun," Tenjouin went on.

Almaz looked down, his hair blowing in the wind as the duel ended

**Almaz** *— 500 LP — 2700 = 0*

"So, it looks like I lost," Almaz said. "Frau Tenjouin, I'll submit to the authorities of the country that owns this island."

“I never said that if I defeated you, you would go back to Japan,” Tenjouin said, smiling gently. Then her expression became firm again. “You need help, Almaz-kun. Your mind’s been twisted in terrible directions by your father.”

“That’s exactly *why* I have to go back to Japan,” Almaz replied.

Tenjouin’s eyes widened and she gasped involuntarily as she realized what he was talking about.

“If I stay here, the chances are good I would try to take Aoyama-kun’s life again,” he went on. “At least in Japan, I’ll be where I can’t hurt him.”

“Almaz-kun…”

“You kept telling me that I have a choice,” Almaz said finally. “And I believed that I didn’t. But now… I’m not afraid of this. This is what I choose. You know it’s for the best.”

“But—!”

Almaz looked down. “Are you going to try to take away my choice as well?”

“No, I wouldn’t do that,” Tenjouin said, and then looked off to the side. “It’s just that… well, it feels

like I’ve failed if I don’t at least try…”

“I know my father is wrong,” Almaz said, choking back a sob. “But he’s the only father I have. I cannot turn my back on his teachings just like that.”

Kiyotaki, Matsutani and Abe had come down from their watchplace and were observing their dialogue.

“It’s okay, Tenjouin-san,” Matsutani said. “Let him do this. He knows that this is the right thing to do.”

Tenjouin clenched her fists. She felt powerless. Again. She’d saved one boy, but she was going to lose another. And there was nothing she could do about it.

In the end, though, there *was* nothing she could do, but to honor that choice. After all, it was the first one he could say he’d made on his own, and it showed awareness. She hit a button on the table which caused her platform to lower itself.

“I saw no problems with the Duel Arena system,” Tenjouin said to Kiyotaki, looking him square in the eye. “We should be fine for tomorrow.”

Kiyotaki nodded quietly as Matsutani approached Almaz, who had lowered his platform as well.

*I have seen remarkable wisdom and integrity in many of these children,* he thought to himself. *Even this boy, who had committed an action many would see as unforgivable, was able to take responsibility for his deeds, and allow justice to be done.*

He thought about Almaz' father, who was still at large. *So why are so many adults unable to do the same?*

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Shougo hugged his pillow as sleep eluded him. His mind was heavy with thoughts. At the future of his body… he knew kidney disease was not a sickness that could be treated with medicine alone. He pictured dialysis and shuddered in fright.

*Don't worry about that now,* he told himself. *It's time to get to sleep. Hopefully Ayukawa-sensei will let me cheer on Chiba-kun tomorrow…*

*Waiting to sleep… waiting for the dream to approach… I see the darkness and I'm so scared…*

*Darkness…*

*‘Darkness’…?*

Shougo was suddenly out of his bed and in his Duel Academy uniform. He was sitting in something resembling the Duel Arena that Tenjouin and Almaz had just dueled in, but the surroundings were of a rainbow color, resembling…

“No,” Shougo shouted. “I’m having a nightmare!” He then saw that the table in front of him was equipped to play Duel Monsters, and there was a deck there as well.

And across from the arena…

Shougo could see someone there. It was human, or at least appeared to be human… but that’s all that he could tell. There were no distinguishing features on that person whatsoever.

“So, shall we begin the final ritual of darkness?” he (the voice seemed male enough) said with a laugh.

“Who are you?” Shougo demanded.

The mysterious figure chuckled. “Is there anyone you want me to be?” he said. “And by the way, the fact that you’ve drawn five cards means you’ve accepted my challenge.”

“What?” Shougo looked at his hand and noticed the cards in it. He hadn’t been aware of himself drawing cards…

“You see, Shougo, you are dreaming,” the figure went on. “But this dream has real consequences. That deck you have in front of you represents the ‘you’ that you want to be. Does that sound familiar?”

“You… you’re Trueman!” Shougo shouted.

His opponent shook his head. “Not quite,” he corrected him. “Trueman is an emissary of mine. He cannot tell lies. I can, though. So it’s up to you whether or not you believe me. But this much is true. Aoyama Shougo… this duel is the ultimate, the final, the last ‘*yami no game*’, the deciding Dark Duel.”

Shougo choked in shock as he put two and two together at last. “You… you’re…”

“Almost there.”

“You’re… Darkness!”

The figure just smiled. “Bingo.”

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Cyber Angel Dakini"***

Level 8 light angel, attack power 2700, defense power 2400. This card can only be summoned by activating "Machine Angel Ritual" and sending monsters from the hand or field equal to its level. It inflicts piercing damage, and when summoned destroys one monster on the opponent's side of the field that they choose. Tenjouin-sensei's tactics have culminated in this, the ultimate machine goddess!

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***Shougo:*** *"Finally, I get an at-bat."*

***Aino:*** *"Shougo is stuck in a dream world with an unknown opponent who says the only way out is to combat him… in a Dark Duel."*

***Shougo:*** *"After how badly my last one went, how could I accept this one?"*

***Chiba:*** *"Don't be afraid, Shougo-kun!"*

***Aino:*** *"As Shougo-kun draws his cards, he discovers that the cards he draws are tied to his consciousness… or perhaps his subconscious?"*

***Toragami:*** *"Aoyama Shougo, the true test of your belief begins now in this, the final* Yami no Game. *You have bonds, you have friends. Rely on us to find your reason for victory!"*

***Shougo:*** *"I try to find that reason, but I can find only pain in victory. What will I do? Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Last Dark Game! The Unreasonable Dream Duel'****."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"Duel… standby."*

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**CARDS USED BY ASUKA TENJOUIN:**

**CRY OF THE LIVING DEAD** *(TCG name: Call of the Haunted)*
*Continuous Trap*
Special Summon 1 monster from your cemetery in Attack position. If that monster is destroyed, destroy this card. If this card is removed from the field, destroy the Special Summoned monster.

**BLUE ICE WHITE NIGHTS DRAGON** *(TCG name: White Night Dragon)*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Water Dragon, 3000/2500)*
Negate the activation of a Magic or Trap Card that targets this card and destroy it. When a face-up Monster you control is selected as an attack target, by sending one face-up Magic or Trap card you control to the cemetery, change the attack target to this card.

**CYBER PETIT ANGEL**

*Effect Monster (LV2 Light Angel, 300/200)*

When this monster is summoned, add 1 “Machine Angel Ritual” from your Deck to your hand.

**MACHINE ANGEL RITUAL**

*Ritual Magic*

This card is used to Ritual Summon a “Cyber Angel” monster. You must also offer monsters as sacrifices from your hand or field whose Level stars equal the Level of the monster you are attempting to Ritual Summon.

**CYBER ANGEL DAKINI**

*Ritual Monster (LV8 Light Angel, 2700/2400)*

This card can only be Ritual Summoned with the Ritual Magic card “Machine Angel Ritual”. When this card is Special Summoned, your opponent selects 1 monster they control and destroys it. During battle between this attacking card and a Defense position monster whose Defense points are lower than this monster’s Attack points, inflict the difference as Battle Damage to your opponent.

**DOBLE PASSE**

*Normal Trap*

Activate only when your opponent’s monster declares an attack on a monster you control. That

attack becomes a direct attack on your Life Points. Then, your opponent takes damage equal to the Attack points of the monster's original attack target.

**EMISSARIES OF HARMONY** *(TCG name: Waboku)*
*Normal Trap*
You take no Battle Damage this turn, and your Monsters cannot be destroyed as a result of battle.

**CYCLONE** *(TCG name: Mystical Space Typhoon)*
*Instant Magic*
Destroy 1 Magic or Trap Card on the field.

**CYBER PRIMA**
*Effect Monster (LV6 Light Warrior, 2300/1600)*
When this monster is Sacrifice Summoned, destroy all face-up Magic cards on the field.

**FULFILLMENT OF THE CONTRACT**
*Equip Magic*
Pay 800 Life Points. Special Summon 1 Ritual Monster card from your cemetery and equip it with this card. If this card is destroyed, destroy the monster it is equipped to.

**ICE BLOCK** *(note: manga exclusive card.)*
*Normal Trap*

Negate the attack of a monster and change it to Defense Position. That monster cannot declare an attack until next turn's End Phase.

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**CARDS USED BY ALMAZ WRIGHT:**

**WIGHT KING** *(TCG name: King of the Skull Servants)*
*Effect Monster (LV1 Dark Undead,?/0)*
The original attack points of this card becomes the number of "Wight" s and 'Wight King "s in your cemetery x 1000. When this card is destroyed by battle and sent to the cemetery, by removing in your cemetery 1" Wight' or "Wight King" other than this card from play, Special Summon this card.

**ANGEL LIFT** *(TCG name: Graceful Revival)*
*Continuous Trap*
Select 1 Level 2 or lower monster from your cemetery and Special Summon it in Attack position. When this card is removed from the field, destroy that monster. When that monster is removed from the field, destroy this card.

**MAGIC SHARD EXCAVATION** *(TCG name: Magical Stone Excavation)*
*Normal Magic*

Discard 2 cards from your hand to activate. Add 1 Magic card in your cemetery to your hand.

**MEZUKI**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Dark Undead, 1700/800)*
You can remove this monster in your cemetery from play to Special Summon 1 Undead-type monster in your cemetery.

**MADAME WIGHT** *(TCG name: The Lady in Wight)*
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Undead, 0/2200)*
Face-up level 3 and lower Undead-type monsters you control, except “Madame Wight”, are unaffected by the effects of Magic and Trap cards and cannot be destroyed in battle. This card’s name is treated as “Wight” while in the cemetery.

**REWARD OF REBIRTH** *(TCG name: Card of Safe Return)*
*Continuous Magic*
When a monster is Special Summoned to the field from your cemetery, you can draw 1 card.

**NECRO GARDNA**
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Warrior, 600/1300)*
Remove this card in your cemetery from play to negate 1 attack this turn from a monster your opponent controls.

**SOUL-ABSORBING BONE TOWER**

*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Undead, 400/1500)*

While there is another Undead-type monster on your side of the field, your opponent cannot select this card as an attack target. Whenever an Undead-type monster(s) is Special Summoned successfully, send 2 cards from the top of your opponent's Deck to the cemetery.

# 34. The Last Dark Game!

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to PM me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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Shougo was in a Duel Arena, surrounded by strange violet and red waves of light. His opponent was almost notable in his non-notable appearance.

"This is the Last *'Yami no Game'*," he told Shougo. "It's true that you're dreaming. Only in the dream time can this kind of challenge happen, though. Don't think this the average dream where you're naked in class."

“You can’t be…” Shougo gasped.

“Yes, it’s possible that I am lying to you and I am not really ‘Darkness’,” the figure responded, and then put his finger to his lip appearing to be in thought. “I guess you’ll need a name to call me, then. I know! Why don’t you call me Ophelia?”

Shougo was caught off guard. “But… you’re a guy.”

“Who says I’m a guy?” He… she… whoever this person was, laughed. “Shougo, you haven’t been paying attention apparently. I’m whatever I want to be! If I choose to be a boy, I’m a boy. If I choose to be a girl, I’m a girl. Right now, I choose to be Ophelia, since I can tell you want to name me so badly.”

Shougo folded the cards up in his hands and put them down on the table in front of him. “I don’t want to take this challenge,” he said. “Get me out of here now.”

Ophelia laughed. “I’d love to do that for you,” she said. “But you see, I can’t do that. Because *you don’t want to wake up.*”

“Yes, I do!” Shougo shouted.

“If you did, then you’d be up,” she replied. “Simple as that. Pay attention, Shougo; this is where it gets good. You are in complete control, Shougo, and you have been — *from the very beginning.*”

“What are you saying?” Shougo demanded, getting frantic. “That I chose all of the terrible things that have happened to me, all the hurt that I put my friends through? I chose all of that?!”

A sinister smile erupted onto Ophelia’s face. “Bingo.”

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 34: “The Last Dark Game! The Unreasonable Dream Duel”***

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“You see, we have a problem here,” Ophelia went on. “We were supposed to have a game where both of us were trying to win, but that doesn’t seem to be the case.”

“Excuse me?” Shougo felt hurt. Was this Ophelia doubting his determination?

“You see, if you wanted to win, it would be easy enough to have simply drawn the five pieces of Exodia,” Ophelia went on. “You’ve seen the cards in your studies, and you know what they look like. But your hand has no parts of Exodia, right?”

Shougo looked at the cards in his hand quickly. “No…” he said. “But how do you know?”

“Another excellent question,” Ophelia said and laughed, her voice purposefully designed to be as androgynous as possible, although the name ‘Ophelia’ continued to cause Shougo to perceive her as female. “You see… I have the same possibility. I didn’t draw Exodia either. In other words… I must draw whatever cards you do.”

“What kind of a game is that?!” Shougo shouted impulsively. “We’d just be counterattacking each other!”

“But this is where our souls part, Shougo-kun,” Ophelia said. “I am ‘Darkness’, you see, and I chose you for a vessel. But you’ve been pitiful! You only have the drive to win when it suits you, and at all other times you seek to make friends. I can’t accept that. That’s why I’ve decided to show you that I am the soul suitable to be in this vessel, and not you. With this duel, I’ll seal you away and correct my

mistake! Aoyama Shougo… you must accept this duel, or you will die!”

“I’ll… what are you saying?” Shougo’s eyes widened in horror as he felt a sickness deep inside.

“Why do you think your kidneys are failing, Shougo-kun?” Ophelia smiled a bitter smile. “You’ve tried to ‘have your cake and eat it too’, so to speak. You want everyone to recognize you as a duelist, but you want everyone to be your friend too. So you feel their bitterness when you defeat them. You’ve taken it all on yourself. Your body can no longer handle it!”

“That’s not true!” Shougo shot back. “It’s just a medical condition… once they find the cause, they can start treating it and…”

“Someone as smart as you surely understands what that entails.” Ophelia tapped the table impatiently. “There will be surgeries and implantations. They will connect machines to your body to keep you alive, and clean out the drive to win from your blood. You will be an impotent mortal, and in a matter of years, your body will give out and you will perish.”

Ophelia then pointed to the sky. “Look here, Shougo-kun,” she said. “If you accept this duel, then the cards will show you the truth. Whether you’re destined to be a winner, or a loser. If you lose, then you’ll be wiped from existence. But you’ve been ready for *that*, haven’t you?”

Shougo bit his lip. His strongest impulse, his gut feeling, was to accept the duel, and trust this person, even though he knew Darkness had turned him against his friends. *Why… why am I going along with this? This person’s a liar! They even said so themselves! So what’s this feeling I have? Am I evil after all?*

“Forget your questions,” Ophelia said and laughed. “Won’t it be better to resolve them in the middle of a passionate duel? Let’s proceed, then! You know what you have to say.”

Shougo looked up and stared his opponent in the eye. He felt the emotions of his early dueling days return. The excitement of asserting oneself. The pressure of the tactics of the ever-evolving game. A second springtime for his youth. *I won’t lose. I promise… I won’t lose!*

His mouth opened, and Ophelia’s did as well, and they spoke the word in unison.

“Duel!”

**Shougo** — *4000 LP*
**Ophelia** — *4000 LP*

“How aggressive you are!” Ophelia said. “I think I’ll take the first move, but first, since you are dreaming, I would have you look at the cards in your hand.”

“Huh?” Shougo said and looked down.

“The far left card represents the far-off past that you don’t remember. Being born, your parents, your childhood. You’ve chosen to forget that, and so the memories are sealed.”

The far left card was “Cyberdark Impact!”. *This card’s no good to me now,* he thought. *This is a card that allows me to summon my deck’s ace, “Cyber Dark Dragon”. But I need the three parts of it in the cemetery!*

“The next card is your direct past,” Ophelia went on. “These are the events that shape you as a duelist now. Those pointless memories and worthless affection that constrain your true power are locked up within that card!”

Shougo's eyes moved to the card, and then he gasped. *Impossible… I removed this card…*

*…It's the Red-Eyes Black Dragon!*

Ophelia chuckled. "You are beginning to understand," she said. "Then I'll have you direct your attention to the middle card, of who you really are."

*Please, don't be Dark King Prometheus,* Shougo said in his mind as he scanned his eyes to that card. *I couldn't take it if…*

Shougo was taken aback by the middle card. "Fusion". Memories came flooding in of his witnessing of the Duel King combating Seto Kaiba. *Somewhere out there, a card must exist that represents the Red-Eyes' true potential.* That card was "Fusion", without a doubt. But why was that card…?

"Are we done with dwelling on memories?" Ophelia chuckled. "Even the present is the past, as the moment you think about it, it is no longer the present! So I'll focus your attention on the future! The card to the right will be your destiny in this duel!"

Shougo's eyes moved with trepidation. "Cyber Dark Edge". *One of the pieces of Cyber Dark Dragon, but I need a level 3 monster in the cemetery for it to be of any use to me right now. As it stands, it's merely one part of a three-piece puzzle.*

"And finally, the destiny you will create for yourself, in the card to your far right!"

*"Meteor Dragon"*. Shougo's eyes looked up to his opponent. *If what 'Ophelia' is saying is true, then I set up my hand so that I could summon "Meteor Black Dragon" on my first turn.*

"You see, Shougo-kun, this is a dream; therefore, even if you looked at the top card of your deck, it would still change to respond to your subconscious desires," Ophelia said with a laugh. "That's why I had you look at your hand; so it would imprint into your mind, and you wouldn't give into the temptation to change the cards. Of course, there is another reason. I'll take the first move. Draw!"

Shougo felt a sick feeling penetrate his heart as an intuition struck him. *For her to say such things about my cards… that means…*

"Magic card 'Fusion' activate," Ophelia said, as the card's image appeared on the playing field.

“From my hand, I sacrifice your believed past and your intended future! Now, rise from the molten ashes of an illusionary destiny! Come out, ‘Meteor Black Dragon’!”

The two dragons appeared and saw a vortex form in mid-air. They leaped towards it, and Shougo, as before, watched awestruck as the product of his imagination was created; a giant dragon made of molten lava and with a power that surpassed the “Blue-Eyes White Dragon”.

**Meteor Black Dragon** — *LV8 Fire Dragon (3500 ATK)*

“As for the card I just drew, well,” Ophelia said with a smile. “I’ll set that card and let you think about that. Turn end!”

Shougo didn’t miss a beat. *If she’s thinking what I think she’s thinking, then she wants me to destroy that dragon,* he said as his hand reached for his deck. *That would be easy enough. I can just summon a Meteor Black Dragon of my own and suicide it. But it’s that facedown…*

*It’s possible that I will draw whatever she draws. But what if she’s lying?*

“My turn, draw!” *Only way out is through,* Shougo said, and then looked at the card he drew. “‘Pot of Greed’, acti…” *Wait a minute.*

“It’s too late,” Ophelia said with a sleazy, crooked grin. “You have to activate it.”

Shougo blinked and bit his lip. *She set it last turn… I wasn’t thinking.* “‘Pot of Greed’, activate,” Shougo said as the green jar appeared on the field. “I’ll draw two cards by its effect.”

As the Pot shattered, Shougo stared at the drawn cards, and his eyes now widened in abject terror.

*“Cyber Dark Horn” and ‘Cyber Dark Keel’!* Shougo choked. *Impossible! It’s too easy! I can activate “Cyberdark Impact!” now and get my ace.*

He then noticed that for it to be effective, he’d have to have a strong monster in the graveyard. Something like…

“‘Fusion’, activate!”

*No! Why am I acting before I think?*

Ophelia’s lopsided Cheshire Cat smile widened. “Go on.”

“I… I send ‘Red-Eyes Black Dragon’ and ‘Meteor Dragon’ from my hand to the cemetery to fusion summon…”

He placed the two cards in the cemetery pile, and then the field rumbled with equilateral power as Shougo’s own Meteor Black Dragon appeared on the field in a fiery blaze to match Ophelia’s.

**Meteor Black Dragon** — *LV8 Fire Dragon (3500 ATK)*

“Now Meteor Black Dragon, attack!” Shougo shouted.

“Meteor Black Dragon, counterattack!” Ophelia ordered.

Both dragons met each other in the air, and the two duelists declared their attack at the same time.

“Burning Dark Meteor!”

Shougo shielded his face as both monsters were consumed in the hellish fires. When the smoke cleared, the field was empty save, of course, for Ophelia’s set card.

*Ophelia must have known, or at least suspected, that I’d immediately play “Pot of Greed”,* Shougo thought. *If she’s telling the truth, then she set that*

*just now. Which means she'll draw "Cyber Dark Horn" the next turn. I have no choice but to keep up my defenses!*

"I activate 'Cyberdark Impact!'!" Shougo shouted.

"How interesting," Ophelia said. "So you drew the other two pieces. You're a legend, just like Yuuki Judai and Mutou Yugi before you."

Shougo shook his head. "Don't even joke! I just got lucky… but I'm going to use what I've gotten."

"'Luck'? Are you serious?" Ophelia put her hand on her forehead. "Do you understand nothing? In this place, you draw the cards you want to draw. And what you call the 'real world' is no different! Face your destiny as the dark Emperor, Aoyama Shougo!"

Shougo rolled his eyes. "I return 'Cyber Dark Edge', 'Cyber Dark Horn' and 'Cyber Dark Keel' from my hand to my deck to fusion summon 'Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon' from my fusion deck!"

The images of the pieces of Cyber Dark Dragon appeared on the field, then linked together in great gusts of black wind. The assembled ace of the Cyber

Dark style was now complete, and it roared a painful roar.

**Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon** — *LV8 Dark Machine (1000 ATK)*

“When this card is fusion summoned, I can also take a dragon monster from my cemetery and equip it to this card, and it will gain attack points equal to the equipped monster! Return, ‘Meteor Black Dragon’! Live again to feed my monster’s power!”

Cyber Dark Dragon’s tentacle-like pincers thrust themselves into the ground beneath it and pulled out Meteor Black Dragon, who shouted in agonized pain as Cyber Dark Dragon fed off of its great power.

**Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon** — *1000 ATK + 3500 = 4500 ATK*

“4500 attack points, eh?” Ophelia whistled. “That’s impressive.”

“Also, because I have two monster cards in my cemetery, Cyber Dark Dragon gains 200 more attack points,” Shougo went on.

The images of the “Red-Eyes Black Dragon” and “Meteor Dragon” cards floated onto the field in front

of Cyber Dark Dragon as its power charge was completed.

**Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon** — *4500 ATK + 200 = 4700 ATK*

“I’d like to end this now, but since my Battle Phase is complete, I can’t attack,” Shougo said. “Turn end.”

“Quite impressive, Shougo-kun,” Ophelia said. “But unfortunately, you’ve fallen into my trap. My turn… draw! And I reveal my facedown… wait for it… ‘Pot of Greed’! So I draw two more cards.”

Ophelia closed her eyes and focused, and drew two additional cards.

Shougo gasped. *If she’s telling the truth… that means she has one unknown card!*

“Before I proceed with my turn, let me tell you a story, Shougo-kun,” Ophelia chuckled. “Pay attention, it’s something really, really good! It’s about the history of Duel Monsters.”

“I *know* about the history of Duel Monsters!” Shougo shouted. “I studied it in class!”

“You think you know, but you don’t,” Ophelia replied. “You are a strange dreamer, Shougo-kun…

even here, in the realm of the subconscious, your conscious mind remains strong, so you can say such silly things as ‘I studied it in class’ in the dream world!”

Shougo sighed. “I have no choice anyway, so go on with your story.”

“Oh, you’ve got this all wrong, dear. You can end this at any time. But since you want to hear the story, I’ll tell you. Before Pegasus J. Crawford created Duel Monsters, spirits existed in a world not unlike yours, except there was no aging or death. Everyone there existed as spirits, as I’ve said before. They were not imprisoned by bodies of flesh.”

“This is stupid.” Shougo slammed his fists on the table. “There’s no way that I’d believe a story like that!”

“However, this was before humans became the dominant species in your world,” Ophelia went on like he hadn’t spoken. ‘Before then, the natural order prevailed and the strong maintained their control over the weak. It was the manifestation of what one of your movies calls the ‘circle of life’.’ She laughed haughtily. “Humans changed everything.”

“What are you talking about, Darkness?!” Shougo demanded.

“Humans introduced the concept of hope, which produced its polar opposite, ‘despair’,” Ophelia explained. “Before hope, the natural order of the world was something which could be called ‘despair’. But before hope, the awareness of despair did not exist. For the animals in the old order of the world, despair was the natural order of things. But humans brought hope, and so those who remained in the old world felt this despair, and tried to eliminate hope, to return the world to its old order. Shougo-kun, I am the manifestation of the old world!”

“You’re still talking nonsense, you monster!” Shougo clenched his fists.

“Then tell me, Shougo-kun,” Ophelia closed her eyes and then opened them again. “If you achieved your dream of being a recognized duelist, what would you do next?”

“What would I do next?” Shougo looked confused. “After achieving your dream, there is nothing left to do!”

“It must be good to be a human with such a simplistic belief,” Ophelia said, turning her head

aside. “And you are so close to achieving that dream too, now that you have found friends. But do you think those friends will stay with you for very long?”

Shougo blinked. “What are you saying?”

“You know that better than anyone else.”

Shougo winced painfully as he remembered how people had whispered about him when he entered Duel Academy.

*“That guy only wins because he gets rare cards.”*

*“Without his luck, you know he’s weak… just look at how he plays!”*

*“Such a guy has no business being here at Duel Academy!”*

“I see it in your eyes, just as I did then,” Ophelia went on. “Your hatred to those people who speak of you as if they know you! That is what dyed the card of your soul black, and allowed me to return to your world! But then…”

*“Don’t hold back on me just because we’re friends, Shougo-kun…”*

*“I’ll awaken the tender soul sleeping inside you!”*

*“When the sun goes down, the moon takes its place. Your determination must become stronger…”*

“That Judai set the stage for those people and their illogical emotions! They’ve corrupted your drive to win, Shougo-kun, and thrust your soul into confusion. The only people who matter are the ones who win! You knew that before, but now you’ve lost sight of your true goal! You and I are the same. We are Darkness — evil itself!”

“No,” Shougo shook his head. “You’re wrong! You’re a dead spirit who’s trying to resurrect himself! As you said, before humans became the dominant species, the law of nature ruled. But we’re here now. We have understood that we are stronger together than we could ever be apart… that’s what my friends have taught me!”

“Utter foolishness,” Ophelia shook her head.

“Oh?” Shougo raised an eyebrow. “You said earlier that your potential and mine are the same. In that case… I should know the card you just drew, right?”

Ophelia looked at her extra card and chuckled.

“If you’d drawn ‘Fusion Cancel’, I would’ve lost for sure,” Shougo went on. “You could have removed ‘Cyber Dark Dragon’ from the field and attacked me directly with a 4700 attack power monster. However, since ‘Cyberdark Impact!’ made me shuffle the deck, you can’t rely on drawing the same as me anymore! Besides…

“If you use that ‘Cyberdark Impact!’ in your hand, I can guarantee you’ll lose next turn.”

Ophelia laughed softly. “Now you are starting to understand, Shougo-kun. The power that you hold, the power of the dark Emperor, the same one that the spirits of old wielded. Ones such as Mutou Yugi and Yuuki Judai, who manipulated the darkness of fate… you are the same.”

“Don’t even compare me to great duelists like Yugi-nii-san!” Shougo shouted. “I’m only strong because of luck. Whatever you want to call it, it’s not a power I want to be able to use. I want to play fairly against my opponents!”

“Once again, you’ve fallen into the illusion that you’re a kind-hearted boy,” Ophelia sighed. “We were truly mistaken to believe you would be a worthy vessel for us. But in any case, this isn’t something you have a choice in anymore! Once you

chose to be the human vessel of ‘Darkness’, you lost any choice you had!”

“Then show me the power of the card you drew that made you laugh just now,” Shougo replied.

Ophelia nodded. “I will now activate ‘Cyberdark Impact’, like you,” she said. “By returning the ‘Cyberdark’ cards in my hand to my deck, I will summon ‘Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon’!”

**Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon** — *LV8 Dark Machine (1000 ATK)*

“I will equip it with Meteor Black Dragon, and have it gain 200 attack points due to the Fusion Material Monsters for that card in my grave,” Ophelia went on.

**Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon** — *1000 ATK + 3700 = 4700 ATK*

“Battle! Attack Shougo-kun’s Cyber Dark Dragon!”

“But it’s a tie!” Shougo shouted. “It will just be like last time!”

“Are you so sure about that?”

“What?”

“Instant magic, ‘Cyber Dark Veil’, activate!” Ophelia laughed out loud.

“What card is that?!” Shougo shouted, indignation in his voice.

“Why… I just made it now,” Ophelia laughed. “Isn’t it nice? Of course, you could have it too, if you wanted! When a ‘Cyber Dark’ monster attacks or is attacked, you see, I can destroy one magic or trap card on the field. And your Meteor Black Dragon counts as one while it’s equipped to your Cyber Dark Dragon!”

“No!” Shougo shouted as whips of dark light struck his machine Dragon’s pincers, which caused Meteor Black Dragon to sink back into the underworld of the duel field.

**Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon** *— 4700 ATK — 3400 = 1300 ATK*

“Go on, my Cyber Dark Dragon!” Ophelia said, laughing madly. “Attack! Full Darkness Burst!”

Three more shocks of dark light pierced Shougo’s weakened machine dragon, and went through to hit Shougo’s body. His nerves burned and his vision

flashed. He shouted in sheer pain as the terror of a Dark Duel was revisted on him.

**Shougo** — *4000 LP — 3400 = 600 LP*

Ophelia now cacked freely as Shougo struggled to keep his footing.

“I guess you think watching me suffer is pretty funny,” Shougo mumbled.

“Oh, it’s the best!” Ophelia said between peals of laughter. She then calmed down. “However, you’re mistaken if you think your body is the one in pain. It’s your soul, weighed down by the despair of Darkness, that suffers! Because you can feel the world’s judgment on you for taking so much damage. Every point of damage your life takes, is one more person jeering at you, isn’t it?”

“I don’t care about those people anymore!” Shougo shouted.

“Oh? And what about the people you call your friends?” Ophelia put the side of her hand to her mouth and laughed some more. “Won’t they become frustrated once you demonstrate your full power as the uncontested Emperor, and stop dueling with you? After all, you don’t understand friendship any other way!”

Shougo looked down sadly.

“You understand, so you should just surrender,” Ophelia cooed almost seductively. “Or are you going to continue to suffer for their sake? I admit it would give me pleasure to crush you slowly and painfully, but you should save us both some time.”

“No, I’m not going to give up,” Shougo shook his head, as his eyes widened with the sudden inspiration of knowledge. “The duelist’s true strength comes from believing in the possibility of victory, and having the courage to fight, until the very last moment when the outcome is decided! I understand that now! Your hand is empty, Ophelia. Are you going to end your turn?”

“Yes,” Ophelia said.

Shougo put his hand on his deck and closed his eyes. *If Cyber Dark Dragon gets through one more time, I’m done for. And if Ophelia can manipulate her deck like she says, then I can’t count on a trap working. There’s only one thing that can help me now… a Magic card! And I know just the one.*

“My turn… draw!”

*I’m making my own fate, Darkness… I’ll use this power to defeat you, but that will be it!*

*The army without resources is not an army at all!* Chiba's voice suddenly resounded in his head.

He looked at the card he drew: "Life Slashing Treasure".

"I activate 'Life Slashing Treasure' from my hand," Shougo said.

Ophelia glanced upward. "Oh? How did *you* get that card, Shougo-kun? Doesn't that card belong to a friend of yours? Wouldn't he be mad that you're stealing from him?"

"I draw cards until I have five in my hand," Shougo went on. "And on my fifth Standby Phase after activation, I have to discard all the cards in my hand. My hand is empty, so I get five new cards."

*If I can create the cards in my deck, as she says, then I should be able to end this now! I can draw the five pieces of Exodia! This is the dreamspace after all… right? Focus, Shougo… picture the five pieces. You know what they look like!*

"Go on, Shougo-kun," Ophelia said, her face suddenly brightening up. "Draw your cards!"

*She's trying to distract my focus,* Shougo thought to himself. *Think of nothing but drawing Exodia.*

*Exodia. Exodia!*

Shougo pulled the five cards and put them in his hand. To his dismay, none of the cards were parts of Exodia.

“Not what you were hoping for, right?” Ophelia smiled. “Dreams are the world of your subconscious. Even if you fight to keep your consciousness in control, that is still an act of your subconsciousness. That is what rules the cards you draw. You love the fight, Shougo-kun! You want it to go on. You only feel alive in a duel! Why would you want it to end so quickly?”

*She’s got a point, though…* Shougo thought to himself. *I can understand myself in a duel. At any other time, I feel embarrassed and lonely… perhaps I really don’t want this duel to end.*

“So, what have you got in your hand?” Ophelia said. “Something that can destroy me? Is that really what you want?”

Shougo grit his teeth.

“Or maybe I could just leave you here to dream forever,” Ophelia went on. “I could do that for you too, you know. Leave you in a world where you always get your way, and your friends will all love

you. Of course, it will be a desperate world. I *am* Darkness, after all. You'll know you're dreaming, and even your happiness will be mired in misery."

"Each of these cards have possibility," Shougo replied. "Darkness… you who understand only 'despair'… I'll show you what 'hope' is."

He looked at his hand. *Something's here that can get me the victory… I just have to figure out how.*

His eyes widened suddenly as he noted the card on the right… a card he'd never seen before.

*The blue dragon brings victory, but the red dragon…*

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***Shougo:*** *"Why should I be the strongest? What waits for me beyond victory?"*
***Aino:*** *"Shougo-kun struggles to find the answers to those questions in the Last* Yami no Game. *The person called Ophelia can only meet those questions with her own logic."*
***Chiba:*** *"Warriors support the rulers! Don't think we can't be friends because of this, Shougo-kun."*
***Isabel:*** *"Shougo-san is a kind-hearted person. How can such a man be an uncontested Emperor? This is*

*what he asks himself."*
***Katsuki:*** *"He's a nice kid, but he doesn't trust us enough. For all the changes he's brought to us, of course we will support him to fight for his life! We don't want to lose our precious friend!"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"We will all unite and stand on the side of our allies. Even if we can never defeat him again, he is still our friend! Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Hope of the Dark World, Aoyama Shougo'****."*
***Shougo:*** *"With this new card, I'll change my fate! Darkness… I'll defeat you with the unmatched strength my allies have given me… the power to believe in myself! Everyone… thank you. I couldn't have surpassed my own despair without you."*
***Toragami:*** *"We'll venture to the unknown destiny together… Shougo."*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon"***
Level 8 fusion dark machine, attack power 1000, defense power 1000. Fuse Cyber Dark Horn, Edge and Keel to create the ultimate dark fusion of machine and magic. Bring out a Dragon from your cemetery and equip it to this monster and gain its

power! It also gains 100 attack points for each monster in your cemetery. Combine it with “Power Wall” and “Cyberdark Impact!” to overwhelm your opponent!

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**CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA AND OPHELIA:**

**CYBERDARK IMPACT!**
*Normal Magic*
Return 1 “Cyber Dark Edge”, ‘Cyber Dark Keel’ and “Cyber Dark Horn” from your side of the field, hand or cemetery to your Deck. Fusion Summon 1 “Armored Black Dragon — Cyber Dark Dragon” from your Fusion Deck.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON** *(TCG name: Red-Eyes B. Dragon)*
*Normal Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
*A black dragon with crimson eyes. The black flames of anger will consume all who appear before its eyes.*

**FUSION** *(TCG name: Polymerization)*
*Normal Magic*
Send Fusion-Material Monsters listed on a Fusion Monster card from your hand or side of the field to

the cemetery to Fusion Summon that Monster from your Fusion Deck.

**CYBER DARK EDGE** *(TCG name: Cyberdark Edge)*
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Machine, 800/800)*
When this card is Normal Summoned, select 1 Level 3 or lower Dragon-type Monster in your cemetery and equip it to this card. It gains Attack points equal to the equipped card's Attack points. This card can attack your opponent directly. If this effect is used to attack, Battle Damage inflicted is halved. If this card would be destroyed by battle, the equipped monster is destroyed instead.

**METEOR DRAGON**
*Normal Monster (LV6 Earth Dragon, 1800/2000)*
*A dragon that came from the outer reaches of space; it fell to the earth with meteors.*

**METEOR BLACK DRAGON** *(OCG-only card; English name given in video games as "Meteor B. Dragon".)*
*Fusion Monster (LV8 Fire Dragon, 3500/2000)*
"Red-Eyes Black Dragon" + "Meteor Dragon"

**POT OF GREED**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 2 cards from your Deck.

**CYBER DARK HORN** *(TCG name: Cyberdark Horn)*
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Machine, 800/800)*
When this card is Normal Summoned, select 1 Level 3 or lower Dragon-type Monster in your cemetery and equip it to this card. It gains Attack points equal to the equipped card's Attack points. This card inflicts penetration damage. If this card would be destroyed by battle, the equipped monster is destroyed instead.

**CYBER DARK KEEL** *(TCG name: Cyberdark Keel)*
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Machine, 800/800)*
When this card is Normal Summoned, select 1 Level 3 or lower Dragon-type Monster in your cemetery and equip it to this card. It gains Attack points equal to the equipped card's Attack points. When this card destroys an opponent's monster, inflict 300 points of damage to your opponent. If this card would be destroyed by battle, the equipped monster is destroyed instead.

**ARMORED BLACK DRAGON — CYBER DARK DRAGON** *(TCG name: Cyberdark Dragon)*
*Fusion Effect Monster (LV8 Dark Machine, 1000/1000)*
"Cyber Dark Horn" + 'Cyber Dark Edge' + "Cyber

Dark Keel”
This card cannot be Special Summoned except by Fusion Summon. When this card is Special Summoned, select 1 Dragon-type Monster in your cemetery and equip it to this card. This card gains Attack points equal to the equipped card’s Attack points. In addition, this card gains 100 Attack points for every Monster Card in your cemetery. If this card would be destroyed by battle, destroy the equipped monster instead.

**CYBER DARK VEIL** *( “Negative Zero” original card. Its English name would be “Cyberdark Veil”.)*
*Instant Magic*
Activate only when a “Cyber Dark” monster battles. Destroy 1 card in the Magic/Trap Card Zone on the field. If the selected card is Set, it cannot be activated in response to this card.

**LIFE SLASHING TREASURE** *(note: anime-only card. Its English name is “Card of Demise”.)*
*Normal Magic*
Draw until your hand contains 5 cards. On your fifth Standby Phase after the activation of this card, discard all cards in your hand into the cemetery.

# 35. Hope of the Dark World, Aoyama Shougo

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to PM me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

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**Shougo** — *600 LP*
**Ophelia** — *4000 LP*

*The army without resources is not an army at all!*

As Shougo drew his next card, facing the overwhelming power of Ophelia's Cyber Dark Dragon, the voice of his friend Chiba suddenly echoed in his head. It wasn't his imagination, he

hadn’t made it up to help him through this. He heard Chiba’s voice.

Shougo then looked at the card he drew: “Life Slashing Treasure”.

“I activate ‘Life Slashing Treasure’ from my hand,” Shougo said.

Ophelia glanced upward. “Oh? How did *you* get that card, Shougo-kun? Doesn’t that card belong to a friend of yours? Wouldn’t he be mad that you’re stealing from him?”

“I draw cards until I have five in my hand,” Shougo went on, ignoring her. “And on my fifth Standby Phase after activation, I have to discard all the cards in my hand. My hand is empty, so I get five new cards.”

Remembering what Ophelia had said about the cards in their decks being drawn from Shougo’s subconsciousness, he pulled his cards trying to make them Exodia so he could end this battle. Unfortunately, when he looked at his hand, none of the cards were Exodia parts.

“Not what you were hoping for, right?” Ophelia smiled. “Dreams are the world of your subconscious. Even if you fight to keep your

consciousness in control, that is still an act of your subconsciousness. That is what rules the cards you draw. You love the fight, Shougo-kun! You want it to go on. You only feel alive in a duel! Why would you want it to end so quickly?"

*She's got a point, though…* Shougo thought to himself. *I can understand myself in a duel. At any other time, I feel embarrassed and lonely… perhaps I really don't want this duel to end.*

"So, what have you got in your hand?" Ophelia said. "Something that can destroy me? Is that really what you want?"

Shougo grit his teeth.

"Or maybe I could just leave you here to dream forever," Ophelia went on. "I could do that for you too, you know. Leave you in a world where you always get your way, and your friends will all love you. Of course, it will be a desperate world. I *am* Darkness, after all. You'll know you're dreaming, and even your happiness will be mired in misery."

"Each of these cards have possibility," Shougo replied. "Darkness… you who understand only 'despair'… I'll show you what 'hope' is."

He looked at his hand. *Something's here that can get me the victory… I just have to figure out how.*

His face brightened suddenly as he noted the card on the right… a card he'd never seen before.

*The blue dragon brings victory, but the red dragon…*

Suddenly, everything became clear to Shougo. In one moment, he surpassed his own limitations.

This is the story of a new legend.

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Midterms***
***Turn 35: "The Hope of the Dark World, Aoyama Shougo"***

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"You have a strange smile on your face, Shougo-kun," Ophelia said. "I've never seen you look like that… at least, not when you're not dueling."

"I'm dueling now, aren't I?" Shougo closed his eyes, his smile remaining on his face. "I realized something just now. Something you might not know. I have friends that you don't have."

“And your ‘friends’ are going to help you win this duel?” Ophelia scoffed. “You have 600 life points. I have yet to be touched. Or are you saying that your friends’ belief in you is going to get you out of this?”

Shougo’s eyes opened narrowly. “That’s exactly what I’m saying… ‘Darkness’.”

Ophelia’s own gaze was reduced to a raw stare. “Show me.”

Reaching for a card in his hand, Shougo closed his hand and touched it. He heard clearly the voice of his teacher, the one who had reached out to him through the darkness of his own desperation.

*Win or draw… there is no ‘lose’ in your destiny.*

“I activate ‘Swing of Fond Memories’,” Shougo declared, throwing the card on the table.

Ophelia looked, for a moment, afraid. “You don’t have that card in your deck, either,” she shouted. “How can you do this?”

*I see it on your face… ‘Darkness’. Despair. I see it as clear as day.*

“This is a card that my teacher used to save me from you!” Shougo replied. “She took the risk, put

her soul on the line as well as mine, just to have the strength to pull me out of that pit. And because of that, part of her spirit lives in me, too. Can you understand that, Ophelia?"

"Just summon your monster," Ophelia replied, turning her head in disdain.

"I choose to revive my own hope, that I had once abandoned. Be reborn by my own voice and my own volition. You are the monster who gave me the power to confront danger. Power I was afraid of. No more! Now, Aoyama Shougo calls on you, my *true* soul!"

A black void surrounded the "Swing of Fond Memories" card image, but this one did not have the sickening vibration of a Darkness-infected card. This dark had the brilliance of moonlight as it shot out onto the field, forming the shape of the legendary dragon.

"I call on you, Red-Eyes Black Dragon!"

**Red-Eyes Black Dragon** — *LV7 Dark Dragon (2400 ATK)*

The Red-Eyes roared with undeniable power.

Ophelia scoffed again. “Calling on that monster like it’s yours,” she sneered. “You do know that the teacher you speak of had a brother who used that card. That very same brother surrendered to Darkness as well! That is the whole reason she reached out to you!”

“Be that as it may, it was the card that brought me here,” Shougo replied. “And nobody is going to convince me that my memory was a mere dream. You may have revived me, but Tenjouin-sensei believed in me and gave me real life.”

“In any case, that thing can’t match my Cyber Dark Dragon’s strength of 4700,” Ophelia replied. “Show me your true plan, Shougo-kun!”

“‘The blue dragon brings victory, but the red dragon brings not victory, but potential,’” Shougo said. “And this card is the proof. You created a card just now with your power. Allow me to do the same!”

“What?” Ophelia shouted. “Impossible… you can’t be thinking…”

“I suppose you know what I’m thinking,” Shougo said, and tugged a strand of his green hair. “But you can’t stop me from doing this. I’m changing destiny

with my own power. If I'm evil power itself, then I'll use that power to erase evil from my world. I'll erase you, Darkness! I remove Red-Eyes Black Dragon from play so that I can evolve it to match my true power."

The figure of the Red-Eyes turned into pitch black as light started to gather around it. It formed the shape of metal and attached itself to the Red-Eyes' body, turning into armor. When the process was complete, gusts of wind burst forth from the monster, revealing its highest form.

"I Special Summon 'Red-Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon'," Shougo said simply.

The dragon gave a robotic howl.

**Red-Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon** — *LV10 Dark Dragon (2800 ATK)*

"But that's not how you summon that card!" Ophelia shouted with increasing indignation.

"I don't know what you know about the cards I hold, but don't think you can apply that knowledge to me here," Shougo responded with a shake of his head. "Especially after challenging me in my own dream space! Or did you think you'd make me afraid? By praising my potential power and

manipulating my desire to remain a kind boy? That doesn't mean I won't use my power to destroy you here!"

"You can talk big all you want, but that card still can't defeat Cyber Dark Dragon," Ophelia said, calm returning to her voice. "You can't touch me!"

"That may be true, but I'm still going to defeat you," Shougo said with a laugh. "I'll now activate Red-Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon's effect. Once per turn, I can special summon a Dragon-type monster in my cemetery. My potential, also, will be reborn right here, right now. The same potential that Yugi-nii-san demonstrated to me that day."

Boiling hot lava flowed forth next to the Red-Eyes, and the Meteor Black Dragon burst forth from that spot, releasing its own howl as well.

**Meteor Black Dragon** — *LV8 Fire Dragon (3500 ATK)*

Ophelia laughed madly. "You keep making these bold moves, but you still can't defeat Cyber Dark Dragon!"

But Shougo's smile widened. "Your frown speaks more than your words, Darkness," he said. "You don't know what the cards in my hand are, do you?

You've been living with me all this time, and you haven't even bothered to understand my feelings towards my friends."

"Useless obstacles," Ophelia clenched her fists.

"Those 'obstacles' are going to be what helps me eliminate you from my body once and for all!" Shougo shouted. "I set one card, and then I'll use my normal summon for this turn. In case you've forgotten, I still haven't done that yet!"

"So show me your final resistance, Shougo-kun!" Ophelia said, her confident smile returning to her face.

Shougo looked at the card he was about to summon. *When I studied for my duel against Horiuchi-kun, I found out all kinds of things about Edo Phoenix,* he thought. *I was planning to play against this card, but I didn't expect Horiuchi to do what he did. Now, I guess I have something of a parting gift from him. Thank you, Horiuchi-kun…*

"I summon 'Destiny Hero Devilguy' in attack position," Shougo said, tossing the card nonchalantly onto the table.

Another shimmer of moonlight on the Duel Arena, and out from it arose a pale-faced warrior

clad in dark armor, a tattered red cape and fierce claws.

**Destiny Hero Devilguy** — *LV3 Dark Warrior (600 ATK)*

Ophelia laughed out loud. “That small fry?! What is he going to do?”

Shougo’s face turned into one of utter determination. “He’s going to take my destiny back from you. Devilguy’s effect, activate!”

Devilguy rushed up to Ophelia’s Cyber Dark Dragon and used its enormous claw to grab it by its neck.

“Destiny Lord!” Shougo shouted.

And, just like that, Cyber Dark Dragon had vanished from the field. Ophelia’s Meteor Black Dragon, which had been fueling Cyber Dark’s power, moaned in misery as it sunk once again into her cemetery.

“What the hell did you do to my Cyber Dark Dragon?” Ophelia demanded.

“Once per turn, I can send a monster two turns into the future,” Shougo explained. “Of course, any equipment attached to it gets destroyed, and you

don’t get it back once it returns. In exchange, I have to skip my battle phase this turn. So don’t worry. Your lifepoints are safe… for now.”

“Don’t screw with me, Shougo!” Ophelia lost her composure.

“I said I would end it if you played ‘Cyberdark Impact!’ last turn,” Shougo went on. “I guess I won’t be able to keep that promise. But trust me… we’re going to settle this! Turn end.”

“Then I’ll show you the real power of Darkness,” Ophelia said, her voice turning deeper and more baritone. “My turn, draw!”

“Before you finish your Draw Phase, I’ll activate my facedown,” Shougo said. ‘Reverse card open… ’Kareijutsu ’Kurenai’!”

*You don’t want to be strong? You don’t want to stand up for your beliefs? Give me a break!*

Shougo closed his eyes and said a silent “thank you” to Isabel. He then opened them as he explained the card’s effect. ‘By sacrificing 1 Fire-attribute monster on my side of the field, you will take damage equal to that monster’s attack points,’ he said. “Meteor Black Dragon! You’ve done very well, but it’s time for you to sleep. I release you now!”

The dragon turned into a molten, massive ball of fire which shot out at Ophelia and enveloped her in heat. She yelled in obvious pain as her life points took a massive hit.

**Ophelia** — *4000 LP — 3500 = 500 LP*

*Shougo… just don't quit.*

Shougo touched his own body, patting himself down. "That didn't hurt," he mused aloud. "Even though Darkness is a part of me…"

"You… how *dare* you!" Ophelia shouted, her voice now undeniably no longer a woman's. "We gave you the opportunity to be reborn in this world and this is the gratitude you show us! Well, you should have summoned something that would destroy us permanently, but you stopped short at ending the duel! We'll make you pay! I activate 'Pot of Greed'!"

"'Pot of Greed'?" Shougo was taken aback. "But you just played that card. You're only supposed to have one of those…"

"You fool, Shougo! Did you expect me to play fair?! I'll draw two cards, but I think you know what I'll be drawing! I play 'Raise Dead' from my hand, and revive a monster… I have my own Meteor

Black Dragon, but I think I'll take yours! Come to my side now!"

The fire dragon appeared on Ophelia's side of the field, appearing to be constrained against its will.

**Meteor Black Dragon** *(3500 ATK)*

"And this other card will be the one to destroy you, so I'll just set that for now," Ophelia said with a wicked grin.

Shougo's eyes widened for a moment. *Could it be… did he draw "Kareijutsu — 'Kurenai'" too?*

"Now, I could hit that Devilguy and cause you extreme pain… would you like that, Shougo-kun?" Ophelia then laughed. "But better to just target that troublesome dragon that betrayed us. Meteor Black Dragon! Destroy that fake Red-Eyes with Burning Dark Meteor!"

Struggling at first but then finally obeying its Master's orders, Meteor Black Dragon struck Red-Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon, filling the arena with fire and ash.

"You only have 600 Life points, so either way, you're finished! Give up your life, Aoyama Shougo!"

But when the attack was complete, Shougo was still standing.

*When the sun goes down, the moon takes its place.*

“I discard from my hand, ‘Arcana Force XIV — Temperance’,” Shougo said as the shadow of an oddly shaped angel monster appeared, blocking the path to Shougo. “And I make battle damage from one attack into zero.”

*Your determination must grow stronger…*

“That damned Light!” Ophelia shouted.

“Don’t call my important ally the ‘Light’,” Shougo shot back. “She’s Toragami Hinata, and she’s made the same choice I’ve made… to not let these battles dictate who we are! Darkness… I’m going to bury you once and for all, here in the void of my dreams!”

“But this battle’s already over!” Ophelia chuckled. “Surely, you know what my facedown is.”

“Why weren’t you ready for the cards in my hand then?” Shougo queried. “Couldn’t you have known about Isabel’s cards before I did? You could have finished me off with that combo much earlier.”

Ophelia just snorted mockingly. “Turn end.”

*I’m bluffing, of course,* Shougo said as he reached for his deck. *But this Ophelia person seems intent on watching me squirm. What was it she called me before… the ‘uncontested Dark Emperor’? That’s silliness… she was just trying to lash at my fragile ego. But what if…*

A sudden shock as Shougo drew his card.

“Ophelia-san,” Shougo addressed his opponent.

Ophelia suddenly blinked as Shougo addressed her unusually.

“Darkness can’t exist as an individual,” he went on. “I know you’ve been lying to me. I really am the incarnation of ‘Darkness’, this force that everyone’s afraid of. But I haven’t lost to it. I’m still me. And if every day is going to be a fight between me and that force, I’ll fight it! I haven’t given up, like you have!”

“Don’t you talk about me like that!” Ophelia’s voice rose to a feverish pitch, but unlike before it was still female. “Whether or not I’m lying is for you to decide!”

Shougo grinned. “Bingo,” he said.

Ophelia was taken aback.

“I sacrifice ‘Destiny Hero Devilguy’,” Shougo went on. “In time, even the greatest emperor must return to darkness. By my tribute, demonstrate my meaning…”

Devilguy vanished as a rupture of darkness came, and the lights in the illusionary room in which they dueled dimmed. An armored tower of a human, dressed in black armor and surrounded by black electrical energy rose onto the field.

“Awaken, ‘Wicked Emperor Gaius’!”

**Wicked Emperor Gaius** — *LV6 Dark Demon (2400 ATK)*

“So, your plan is to remove my Meteor Black Dragon with its effect,” Ophelia mused.

“And attack your ‘Magic Cylinder’, right?” Shougo shook his head. “I’m not using Gaius’ effect on your monster. He’s going to use it… on himself. Go, Gaius! Darkness Edict!”

Gaius raised its arms over its head as a bolt of lightning erupted from it, striking the floor beneath it. A portal opened, and Gaius fell in. It crossed its

arms and, even though it had no visible eyes, seemed to stare at its opponent as it fell in.

“You removed your own monster?!” Ophelia shrieked. “But why would you *do* that?”

“When Gaius’ effect removes a Dark-attribute monster from play, it inflicts 1000 points of damage to the opponent,” was Shougo’s reply.

Out of the hole left in the ground, another bolt of dark lightning crackled forth from it, and struck Ophelia full on in the chest.

**Ophelia** — *500 LP — 1000 = 0*

“Game over,” Shougo muttered in English as the world of the arena started to shake.

“Very good,” Ophelia said, applauding weakly. “In this last *yami no game*, humanity’s come out the victor, as we expected. But don’t think this means things will go smoothly for you.” She then choked and dropped to the floor as the Duel Arena fell away.

Impulsively, Shougo ran to Ophelia. “Are you okay?”

Ophelia laughed. “You were right, Shougo-kun,” she said. “Against the overwhelming despair of

Darkness, I gave up, and became its puppet. It was a fun duel, wasn't it?"

"Not if you're going to die here!" Shougo sighed and clenched one of his fists. "I knew the whole time it would end this way, and I went ahead and did it."

"You're the 'uncontested Dark Emperor'… there was no other way for this to end." Ophelia chuckled weakly as her body started to disappear.

"I don't want to hear nonsense about that now," Shougo's eyes started to tear up. "It looks like I'm feeling your pain after all, Darkness…"

Ophelia reached into her back, and pulled out a flower as her body continued to fade.

"What's this?" Shougo asked, confused.

"There's rosemary…" Ophelia whispered. "That's for remembrance. Pray, love, remember…"

She finally disappeared completely, leaving only the flower. Shougo, not sure what to do, smelled the flower.

The scent triggered something…

---

*Only a dream…*

Shougo opened his eyes. He was in his hospital bed. The monitors were beeping as usual.

Toragami was there.

Despite her sudden appearance, Shougo didn't seem frightened. "Toragami-san?" he asked.

"It wasn't just a dream," Toragami said, and held up a flower — a pansy. "You're free now, Shougo-kun."

"No, I can't believe that," Shougo said, looking down. "I don't know how you know my dreams, but this is reality. I shouldn't just refuse Ayukawa-sensei's treatment because I think I'm better."

"That's very wise," Toragami said, and put the pansy down on the nightstand. "You've grown. You're not the boy playing children's games you were when we first fought."

"I can't believe that, either." Shougo laughed uncomfortably. "However I acted in that dream, it wasn't real."

"You don't understand yet," Toragami said, turning her back. "That's to be expected. Sleep now. You'll have the dreams of a child."

Shougo shifted uncomfortably.

“That’s a compliment, by the way,” Toragami cryptically added as she walked out of his room.

Shougo glanced at the pansy, and remembered the rosemary from his dream. He knew full well what this meant.

*There is pansies, that’s for thoughts… I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died…*

Shougo went through his card deck and sighed. “As I thought… it wasn’t only a dream,” he said out loud. “But I’m not going to surrender to my impulse… not after how far my friends came to save me.”

He closed his eyes and could see clearly a playground with a swingset.

*I’ve lost my memory, it seems… but I’ll use this power, and create new ones. But I won’t forget the past, either. Tenjouin-sensei, Isabel-san, Chiba-kun… Toragami-san!*

And he heard a voice in the playground.

“Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be…”

*If life's a mystery to be solved, I'll just wait for further evidence before jumping to conclusions,* Shougo thought to himself before he surrendered to the dream. *And above all things, I'll be true to myself. That way, I'll never lie to anyone ever again…*

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***Shougo:*** *"It looks like my long struggle against Darkness is finally over."*
***Chiba:*** *"But the battles have just begun for the rest of us! The next day at Duel Academy brings a surprise as Tenjouin-sensei announces the format of the Genex finals."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"As an employee of Duel Academy, I must support Kiyotaki-kouchou, but I am at a loss to understand this either."*
***Toragami:*** *"Time is our only ally now."*
***Aino:*** *"As we await 'zero hour', tensions flare and questions are raised. Next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Preparation for the Finals! The Sixty Card Rule'****. Please enjoy."*
***Shougo:*** *"There'll be more duels for me in the future, too!"*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Red-Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon"***

Level 10 dark dragon, attack power 2800, defense power 2400. What was once a beast that submitted to the will of Darkness is now Aoyama Shougo's true ace — you can summon it by removing 1 dragon you control from the game. Once per turn, special summon 1 dragon from your hand or cemetery to the field! Truly awesome, Shougo-kun!

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**CARDS USED BY SHOUGO AOYAMA:**

**LIFE SLASHING TREASURE** *(note: anime-only card. Its English name is "Card of Demise".)*
*Normal Magic*
Draw until your hand contains 5 cards. On your fifth Standby Phase after the activation of this card, discard all cards in your hand into the cemetery.

**SWING OF FOND MEMORIES** *(TCG name: Swing of Memories)*
*Normal Magic*
Special Summon 1 Normal Monster from your cemetery. It is destroyed during the End Phase of this turn.

**RED-EYES BLACK DRAGON** *(TCG name: Red-Eyes B. Dragon)*
*Normal Monster (LV7 Dark Dragon, 2400/2000)*
*A black dragon with crimson eyes. The black flames of anger will consume all people who appear before its eyes.*

**RED-EYES DARKNESS METAL DRAGON**
*Effect Monster (LV10 Dark Dragon, 2800/2400)*
You can remove 1 Dragon-type monster you control from play to Special Summon this card. Once per turn, you can Special Summon 1 Dragon-type monster from your hand or cemetery, except "Red-Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon".

**METEOR BLACK DRAGON** *(TCG name: Meteor B. Dragon)*
*Fusion Monster (LV8 Fire Dragon, 3500/2000)*
"Red-Eyes Black Dragon" + "Meteor Dragon"

**DESTINY HERO DEVILGUY** *(TCG name: Destiny Hero — Doom Lord)*
*Effect Monster (LV3 Dark Warrior, 600/800)*
Once per turn, if this card is in face-up Attack position, you can remove 1 monster your opponent controls from play. If you use this effect, you cannot declare an attack this turn. Return the removed monster to the opponent's side of the field in the

same battle position during your second Standby Phase after activation.

**KAREIJUTSU "KURENAI"** *(TCG name: Spiritual Fire Art — "Kurenai")*
*Normal Trap*
Sacrifice 1 Fire-attribute monster on your side of the field to inflict damage to your opponent equal to the Attack points of the selected monster.

**ARCANA FORCE XIV — TEMPERANCE**
*Effect Monster (LV6 Light Angel, 2400/2400)*
During either player's turn, you can discard this card from your hand to reduce Battle Damage from 1 attack to 0. When this card is Summoned, flip a coin and apply the appropriate effect:
* Heads: Halve all Battle Damage you take.
* Tails: Halve all Battle Damage your opponent takes.

**WICKED EMPEROR GAIUS** *(TCG name: Caius the Shadow Monarch)*
*Effect Monster (LV6 Dark Demon, 2400/1000)*
When this card is summoned with a sacrifice, remove from play 1 card on the field. If the card is a Dark-attribute Monster, inflict 1000 points of damage to your opponent.

**CARDS USED BY OPHELIA:**

**ARMORED BLACK DRAGON — CYBER DARK DRAGON** *(TCG name: Cyberdark Dragon)*
*Fusion Effect Monster (LV8 Dark Machine, 1000/1000)*
"Cyber Dark Horn" + 'Cyber Dark Edge' + "Cyber Dark Keel"
This card cannot be Special Summoned except by Fusion Summon. When this card is Special Summoned, select 1 Dragon-type Monster in your cemetery and equip it to this card. This card gains Attack points equal to the equipped card's Attack points. In addition, this card gains 100 Attack points for every Monster Card in your cemetery. If this card would be destroyed by battle, destroy the equipped monster instead.

**POT OF GREED**
*Normal Magic*
Draw 2 cards from your Deck.

**RAISE DEAD** *(TCG name: Monster Reborn)*
*Normal Magic*
Select 1 monster card in either player's cemetery and Special Summon it to your side of the field.

**MAGIC CYLINDER**
*Normal Trap*

Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Negate that attack, and inflict damage to your opponent equal to the Attack points of the attacking monster.

# 36. The Sixty Card Rule

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to PM me your thoughts. Thank you very much for reading.*

---

Chiba rubbed his eyes and awoke unsteadily.

After Shougo'd given Chiba his Star point, Chiba registered as a finalist. Most of the rest of the school was unaware. Only Mark and Isabel knew for a fact that Chiba had made it through, and Chiba'd asked them not to tell anyone. He knew it'd shake up the school.

Chiba heard his PDA ring as he was getting dressed. When he picked it up, the message was: *After homeroom, all students must attend an assembly in the Main Convention Room at 10:00am.*

Chiba nodded. *They're probably going to announce the finalists and the details of the tournament,* he thought to himself. *I should prepare myself. This is probably going to be a big deal.*

---

***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Finals***
***Turn 36: "Preparation for the Finals! The Sixty Card Rule"***

---

Asuka Tenjouin rubbed her eyes as she sat on her chair, reading over the notes for her speech again.

"You're exhausted from staying up so late and dueling Almaz-kun," Matsutani said. "You should let Raiku-san deliver the speech."

"Thank you for your concern, Matsutani-san," Tenjouin said and smiled. "But it's important that I do this. As head professor of the school, it's my duty."

Kiyotaki shook his head with crossed arms. “Everyone has their limits, Tenjouin-san,” he said. “You shouldn’t push yourself too hard.”

“Some people do not have limits at all, Kiyotaki-san,” Tenjouin muttered. “I am simply trying to understand that.”

Kiyotaki sighed. *Still upset with me, I see,* he thought to himself. *You should not confuse Heinrich Wright’s behavior with my own. But there is no way to convince you of that.*

Tenjouin got up from her chair. “I’m going to my personal quarters to prepare further for the speech,” she said. “Please have Raiku-san call Ayukawa-sensei. I want to check up on Shougo-kun.”

“Right,” Matsutani said.

Mitsuo Tahuru, who had been sitting in the room, spoke up after Tenjouin left. “She is certainly a handful, Kiyotaki-san,” he said with a chuckle. “You should exercise your authority more.”

Kiyotaki drummed his fingers on the table. “Tahuru-san, as sponsor of the Genex tournament, you have your own responsibilities,” he said. “Please keep your thoughts towards achieving those ends.”

“Ah, excuse me, Kiyotaki-san.” Tahuru gave an insincere chuckle in his apology.

Kiyotaki paused to ponder. *I know what my organization’s goals are, but they cannot be achieved unless Aoyama Shougo and Toragami Hinata are at the tournament. And with Shougo-kun taken with this illness, it may not be possible. Still…*

---

Shougo opened his eyes.

His moments of wakefulness were few and far between. In his dreams, he was very young and exchanging in playful behavior. He remembered dueling on occasion, but always as a playful game, never with Solid Vision illusions.

Ayukawa was at his bedside, holding some printouts. She did not look happy.

“Ayukawa-sensei?” he asked her.

“I’m sorry, Shougo-kun, I want to tell you something good,” she said. “But I can’t lie. Your bloodwork still looks bad. In fact, it’s actually gotten worse. Your parathyroid hormone levels are extremely high.”

“I thought it might get worse,” Shougo said, sighing with what little power he could muster.

“I’m afraid that…” Ayukawa held her arm in despair. “I…”

She sighed. *I should tell him that he needs emergency dialysis*, she thought to herself. *But… this boy… how can I…*

“You just keep resting, Shougo-kun,” she said finally. “I’ll keep looking at your labs.”

Shougo nodded and closed his eyes, and once again he was dreaming.

Ayukawa left Shougo’s hospital bed, and started to weep silently. *There must be an answer… a way to treat him that isn’t so brutal. I should call a doctor in on this case… so why can’t I…*

*What is this horrible sorrow that I feel?…*

---

When Chiba entered the assembly hall, it was already crowded. He looked to where the Osiris normally sat. He knew Shougo would still be in the medical office, but a childish part of him hoped to see him there. However, he did expect Almaz to be

there; he wasn’t. Chiba remembered Almaz disappearing during Mark’s duel with Katsuki, and felt a knot in his stomach.

“Chiba-kuuun!” a female voice called from the other side of the seats.

Chiba turned to see Isabel, along with Mark, calling to him. *That’s right… they’re my friends, too*, Chiba thought with a smile as he trotted down the stairs to sit with them. The assembly was about to begin.

Asuka Tenjouin arrived shortly before the students. She waited for them to quiet down before she began her speech. “Hello, students,” she said. “As you may have suspected, this assembly is about the Genex midterm elimination rounds that took place yesterday on this island. We will now announce the eight finalists who survived those rounds.”

She then turned on the display behind her, and the names were displayed.

**AINO NAOMI**
**ITOU TOMOYO**
**ISABEL SUÁREZ**
**CHIBA KATSUROU**

**TORAGAMI HINATA**
**MASAKI GANRYU**
**MIZUNO KAGOME**
**MARK WALKER**

“These are the eight students who have achieved the goal of the Genex tournament, and will now compete in the finals for the title of ‘Kaiser’,” Tenjouin said as the display screen showed the names in both Japanese logographs and Latin letters.

As she expected, the crowd of assembled students broke out in murmurs as they realized that one of the finalists was an Osiris. Many of them knew who Chiba was, but none of them expected him to be good enough to be a finalist.

“An Osiris as Kaiser?” one said. “You think it might actually happen?”

“Not that guy… he’s too straightforward. He just doesn’t have what it takes.”

“How could *he* get in the finals? I can beat him easy.”

Chiba himself stared straight on ahead, thoughts focused on his teacher. Flanked by Mark and Isabel, two other finalists, he seemed to be putting space between himself and the rest of the school.

“Now, to announce the format of the Genex finals,” Tenjouin went on. “It will be conducted in a single elimination format. The brackets will be announced at a later time, but first, I will tell you the deck assembly method.”

“Deck assembly?” Ganryu could be heard to ask among others.

“The finalists will be required to assemble a card base, choosing sixty cards for that base,” Tenjouin explained. “Before each duel, you will choose 40 cards among that base, and those cards will become your deck. There will be no side decks or replacements; you must choose from the sixty selected cards.”

“A side deck is 15 cards normally,” Chiba said aloud. “With a sixty-card base, you essentially have a 20-card side deck, it seems… but it’s a one-shot deal.”

Isabel nodded. “It doesn’t leave much room to improvise,” she said. “But we know who our opponents are, and we can prepare.”

“They can do the same too, though,” Mark reminded them both.

“Now, those of you who chose not to participate in the tournament will turn in your reports,” Tenjouin said. “Those who were eliminated, you must write a ten-page paper about your experience, relating your duels and what you have gained from your examination.”

“WHAAAT?!” many students were heard to exclaim.

“If you thought you would get out of doing work by simply entering the tournament with no intention to win, you made a very large mistake,” Tenjouin said and smiled. “The eight finalists must now return to their domitory rooms and assemble their cards. Please return to the technological area within two hours and submit your base decks. This assembly is now concluded.”

Mark and Isabel got up, and noticed Chiba sitting down, lost in thought.

“Come on, it’s time to go,” Isabel prodded him. “If you don’t hurry, you’ll forget about making your deck.”

“Oh… yes, Isabel-san, you’re right,” Chiba said after a startled moment. “Thank you.”

“Hey, don’t thank us yet,” Mark said with a laugh. “We might become your opponents soon. Just prepare your best deck and come at us full power!” He said the last words in English while flexing his muscle, an action which caused Isabel and Chiba to sweatdrop.

Tenjouin watched the students file out, and sighed softly.

*This tournament is bringing out the best in my students… but I still feel uneasy. There’s more going on than I’m being told. Kiyotaki-kouchou… what exactly are you trying to find out?*

---

“I’ll have to think about my extra twenty cards,” Chiba said, walking alongside Isabel and Mark.

“Yeah. I had a deck ready, but now I’m going to have to think about how to use my twenty extra to the best,” Isabel added.

“I wonder if two hours is really enough time,” Mark pondered aloud. “For real… these guys are really making us work for this tournament. This is unlike anyone I’ve been in.”

“You need some help there, fellow sea dweller?” a voice called.

It was Mizuno.

“You want to help us out?” Mark asked with a blink.

“Why not?” Mizuno replied. “It would make the finals more interesting.”

“You sure you want to take that chance?” Isabel pressed on.

“I’m not sure why I’m dong this…” Mizuno said with a moan. “I think maybe it’s because of Chiba-kun. I thought it was weird how you knew my name, but I like being recognized. What can I say?”

“Oh, is that so?” Chiba said, and blushed, feeling like he was being put on the spot. “Sorry…”

“Well, I’ll just tell you that I don’t plan on using the Ultimate D-Card in the finals,” Mizuno went on, walking with the three. “Now that everyone’s seen it, I can’t take the chance on people playing countertactics.”

“So what are you g…” Mark started, but Isabel stopped him with a shake of her head.

“I know you won’t tell us about what you will use,” Chiba said with a curious tone. “But can you tell us about Itou Tomoyo? I know she’s chairperson of the biology class, but I’ve never seen her duel.”

“Oh, Tomoyo-san?” Mizuno said with a laugh. “Well, as you’d expect, she runs plants. But I have a feeling she’ll throw you for a loop if you’re not ready for her!”

“Do you know her?” Chiba asked.

“That’s a secreeeet!” Mizuno laughed once more and then ran off. “See you all at the finals!”

“Really,” Isabel said as she watched her go. “That Mizuno-san… she’s a strange type of person.”

“She’s interesting.” Mark smiled. “Maybe she and I will get to duel.”

Isabel just stopped Mark short by holding him by the shoulder. “You’re not ready for her type,” she said with chagrin.

Chiba frowned a bit. *Aino Naomi and Itou Tomoyo… these are two names I know little about as far as dueling goes. If I am to carry through Shougo-kun’s wishes, it woud be easier if I weren’t paired against them… or Masaki Ganryu-sama, either.*

*Why am I thinking this way all of a sudden? It's just a tournament.*

Chiba shook his head. *No, it's more than that. Shougo-kun's given me his wishes. I have to carry them through to the end! No… I* will!

He walked with more determination, until he realized that Isabel and Mark were no longer with him, having returned to the Ra Yellow dorms.

*I need to be more aware of my surroundings,* he thought with much regret.

---

Alone in her dorm room, Hinata Toragami fanned out her deck in front of her.

She was deep in thought.

*I know what will happen in my future,* she thought to herself. *There is no need for me to feel all this dread. So then what is this new feeling that I can't put into words?*

Toragami took out a set of twenty cards to add to her deck in anticipation of today's announcement. Some of them she had been planning to use against Shougo, but now that would not be possible.

*You are still resisting your power, Aoyama Shougo,* Toragami thought as an unusually remorseful expression came over her face. *If you were just to have released your qualms back then, you wouldn't be going through this ordeal. Now, even I don't know what your fate will be.*

She then clutched her shoulder, appearing to be in pain and dropping her cards. She held her prosthetic arm until the pain passed, gritting her teeth.

*You damned Light… every day is a struggle.* She got to her feet and proceeded to pick her cards back up. *I'm going to need to call my doctors to check up on my arm again, as well*, she thought. *Thanks to you, though, I can't tell when my pains are physical and when they're brought on by you.*

When she was done assembling her deck, Toragami took a minute to sit on her bed, look at the ceiling and reflect.

*Darkness… it would appear our goals are the same. To eliminate the Light of Ruin… but it seems that Judai was right. I can't let go of it just yet.*

---

Shougo opened his eyes, being drawn from a dream once more, to see Chiba at his bedside.

“Chiba-kun, what are you doing here?” he murmured. “You should be working on your deck.”

“I already turned it in,” Chiba replied. “Maybe I was hasty, but I can’t help it. I’m worried about you…”

“I’m worried, too,” Shougo sighed. “Something’s seriously wrong with me, but Ayukawa-sensei doesn’t know what it is. At this rate, I…”

He trailed off, and there was a silence.

“Well, it’s only been one day!” Chiba said, laughing. “A lot can change in one day, you know.”

“This is serious, Chiba-kun,” Shougo said, gripping his sheets tightly. “This isn’t something I can change by hoping or believing.”

“Maybe you can’t change your body, but having a positive outlook can’t hurt, right?”

“Can it?” Shougo frowned. “If I go on believing that I’ll get better someday, and I never do, won’t that just hurt more in the end?”

This comment hurt Chiba when he thought about it. *He's right… I don't have an answer for that. To believe with all one's heart in a miracle that never comes is a heartbreak I don't think I could bear. Shougo-kun… are you trying to say you deserve this because you're a bad person?*

He frowned and looked off to the side. *What can I say to convince you that you're wrong?*

"I hope you'll do your best in the tournament," Shougo said.

"I don't know how *not* to do my best." Chiba laughed.

"Don't kid." Shougo closed his eyes and frowned. "I haven't forgotten… our first duel."

Chiba's laughter was cut short. It was true… he was so caught up in the fun of the duel, he had forgotten to attack with his third Command Knight that day. But that wasn't because he was trying to take it easy on Shougo…

"That was an accident!" Chiba told Shougo in earnest. "I just got so swept away in my feelings…"

"That's not true," Shougo said with a shake of his head. "It's not like you to make a mistake, Chiba-

kun. You're like Tenjouin-sensei… you see me as sensitive, as someone who can't handle losing. Maybe you think you got caught up, but I know you were taking it easy on me."

"Shougo-kun," Chiba said with a look of dismay on his face.

"That's okay…" Shougo sighed. "You're right. I still have a hard time with losing… look at how I fell apart when Toragami-san defeated me. I know you've been thinking you're not a good opponent for me, but the truth is, I'm not a good opponent for anyone. Chiba-kun, I look up to you."

"What? Me?"

"You run the cards you run, and you don't let anyone tell you any different." Shougo smiled a bit. "If I could do that, I'd be better able to live up to the legacy that Yugi-nii-san left to me… and to what Dark Armed Dragon called me to do."

Chiba sat back in his chair. *I don't know what he's talking about… but I know Shougo-kun is trying his best. I've got to do the same…*

"I'm feeling tired," Shougo said weakly.

“Alright…” Chiba got up. “I’ll let you rest. Thanks for talking with me, Shougo-kun. It helped a lot.”

Shougo was already asleep, though.

When Chiba was walking out of the medical office, he was deep in thought.

*Did I let Shougo-kun win that day without realizing it? I need to overcome that. I need to take all of my opponents seriously, or I shouldn’t even call myself a duelist.*

---

Kiyotaki frowned deeply.

“What exactly are you proposing, Tahuru-san?” he said to the Genex sponsor.

“We both have an interest in that boy showing up at the tournament, if just to watch,” Tahuru replied. “And we know that woman in your employ won’t let him go no matter what you say.”

Kiyotaki put his hands together. “And you think you can convince her?”

“I think if you let me try, we’ll both draw some benefit.” Tahuru smiled coolly. “It’s not without risk, but then, what is?”

“I will not have you intimidating one of my employees,” Kiyotaki said, his eyes stern in communicating this.

“Oh, nothing like that, I promise you,” Tahuru said. “I will simply persuade her that it’s in her best interests to let the boy go. Watching a nice, fun tournament would be good for his health, wouldn’t you say?”

“The more you talk, the less I trust your methods,” Kiyotaki replied. “But as the matter is an urgent one, I will let you talk to Ayukawa-san. However, she *will* report to me if you try to beguile her or frighten her in any way.”

“I’m always a gentleman,” Tahuru said, and then bowed. “With that, I’ll be off.”

Kiyotaki didn’t answer, but sat back down at his desk and turned to the window. He heard the door close and could see, by the reflection from the glass in front of him, that Tahuru was gone.

*I have a terrible feeling about this, but it’s true. For our goals to succeed, Shougo-kun and*

*Toragami-san have to be in that arena together, at least. But Tahuru-san, what are you planning?*

---

Ayukawa read the results of Shougo's blood test one more time, and sighed.

*Nothing new is coming here,* she thought to herself. *I can't feel right with myself unless I start him on dialysis right away. We're not equipped at Duel Academy for that, though. That would mean sending him away…*

She looked at the bed where Shougo lay.

*It's his dream to be a recognized duelist, but now he's here. I wonder if he'd give up that dream if pursuing it meant he would die. I don't want to be the one to take that away from him.*

"Ah, Ayukawa Emi. Deep in thought, are we?"

Mitsuo Tahuru had already arrived at the medical center.

"You're Mitsuo Tahuru, the sponsor of the Genex tournament," Ayukawa said, looking him over.

“That’s right,” Tahuru said. “I see you know me well.”

“I also knew you and Tenjouin Asuka knew each other in school,” she added. “And not on friendly terms.”

“We had our differences,” Tahuru admitted. “But that’s not important now. What *is* important is that boy sleeping over there.”

“Shougo-kun?” Ayukawa gasped. “What are you saying?”

Tahuru took a coin out of his pocket and flipped it. Looking at the result, he kept it to himself as he put it back.

“We would really appreciate it if you told a lie for us,” he explained.

---

***Shougo:*** *“I’d really like to watch the finals… but I’m not going anywhere unless Ayukawa-sensei says it’s okay.”*
***Aino:*** *“Everyone would like it if you came, but Ayukawa-sensei cannot understand the nature of Shougo-kun’s illnesses. However, the mysterious Mitsuo Tahuru is here with a proposal..”*

***Tenjouin:*** *"That boy is always up to something."*
***Toragami:*** *"He wants Shougo-kun to observe the finals, and tells Ayukawa-sensei to let him go, and then reveals a secret close to her heart."*
***Aino:*** *"Will Ayukawa-sensei give in to Tahuru's temptation? Find out next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Self's Motivation! Tahuru's Promise'****. Please enjoy."*
***Shougo:*** *"Ayukawa-sensei… follow your heart. It's not evil to have feelings for someone!"*

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Command Knight"***

Level 4 fire warrior, attack points 1200, defense points 1900. This card gives herself and other warriors 400 attack points, and when other monsters are on the field, she can't be attacked! With two or three of her on the field, your opponent can't attack! That's the patented Chiba-sama Command Knight Lock! Oh, excuse me!

# 37. The Self's Motivation! Tahuru's Promise

---

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put it back.

“We would really appreciate it if you told a lie for us,” he explained.

---

***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Finals***
***Turn 37: “The Self’s Motivation! Tahuru’s Promise”***

---

“A… lie?”

Tahuru nodded. “You see… I have an interest in Aoyama Shougo being at that tournament. Because if he’s not, the entire school could be in danger.”

He gave a coy smile. “But, what I really mean is, my organization has an interest. It’ll be interesting to me either way.”

“What do you mean, the ‘entire school’?” Ayukawa narrowed her eyes. “What do you know about Shougo-kun?”

“I expect that Kiyotaki-san has told you of the ‘Darkness incident’ 15 years ago?”

Ayukawa nodded. “Yes, he told me… but to be honest, it seems like fanciful speculation.”

Tahuru laughed out loud. “As expected of the head nurse of Duel Academy, you don’t believe anything you do not observe for yourself. I’m a bit similar. For example, I didn’t quite believe it at first when I read these hospital reports.”

“Hospital reports?”

“Yes, 25 years ago, it would seem, a woman named Ayukawa Emi gave birth to a baby boy at St. Luke’s International Hospital, and soon after gave it up for adoption.”

Ayukawa’s eyes widened. *Wh… what? How could he know about…*

Tahuru put the papers down. “I didn’t believe it, so I looked into it myself. It seems you were in college at the time training to be a nurse, and taking care of a child would have gotten in the way of all of that. So you gave him up, just like that. How befitting of someone with a future in the medical trade.”

Ayukawa was left speechless.

“Now, regarding Aoyama Shougo… that boy has the power of Darkness inside him. That is the cause of his illness. Nothing medical will demonstrate that to you, and there’s nothing you can do. One day, sooner than you know, he will die. And even if you start him on dialysis, that can’t be prevented.”

“No!” Ayukawa shouted. “No… that’s impossible. It’s just a sickness of the kidneys. The blood work is cut and dry.”

“But you can’t find the cause, can you?” Tahuru smiled again — a cold and unfeeling smile. “Are you hoping a doctor will be able to?”

“A nephrologist will surely be able to,” Ayukawa stated.

“Ah, but the tests poor Shougo-kun will have to go through.” Tahuru closed his eyes and shook his head. “Doesn’t it hurt your heart to think about it?”

Ayukawa clenched her chest. He was right; it *did*, quite literally, hurt her heart when she thought about the tests Shougo would have to be put through. If the blood work revealed nothing, it was quite possible a biopsy would have to be done. Dialysis was a foregone conclusion; a catheter would be placed into his body, and his circulatory system would be

altered so that he could, in the future, receive dialysis via needles inserted into his arm.

Even then, recovery from kidney disease seldom happened. He was looking at a transplant and a future on immunosuppresant drugs.

“I’m telling you that none of those will help,” Tahuru went on. “Here is what Kiyotaki-san tells me happened. Fifteen years ago, Darkness absorbed the souls of everyone in this world, and gained tremendous power. But he made the mistake of challenging Yuuki Judai to a duel. Darkness lost his hold of despair, and almost everyone returned. Shougo-kun was one of those who did not.”

“Shougo-kun… remained in Darkness?” Ayukawa couldn’t keep track of the conversation anymore.

“Now, 15 years later, Darkness has decided to return to challenge the Light of Ruin at the height of its power. It chose Aoyama Shougo as its vessel, and he reincarnated into the boy on that bed there. However, the individual ‘Shougo-kun’ retained his self-awareness. He didn’t want to be Darkness. So he’s causing his body to self-destruct.”

“I can’t believe any of this,” Ayukawa grunted. “It’s unscientific nonsense.”

“Feel free to believe or disbelieve all you want,” Tahuru said. “What I’m proposing is simple. Tell Shougo-kun he is well enough to attend the tournament, and I can tell you where your child is. Or do you no longer care about his whereabouts?”

Ayukawa gasped in utter shock. “You…”

“That’s right. That’s the deal. Simple as that.”

Tahuru took his coin out of his pocket again and held it in his hand. He then placed it on the counter. “I’ll come back at 6pm. If the coin is heads, we have a deal. If it’s tails, we don’t. I like to keep things simple.”

He picked up Ayukawa’s medical papers and walked away.

Ayukawa stared into space, a bead of sweat rolling off of her face. She felt her age for the first time. *It’s been so long… I’m ashamed to say, so much has happened… I’ve forgotten. I’ve forgotten about my son. And now…*

---

*“Emi-chan, this is a* child *you’re talking about. This isn’t something you can just cut away.”*

*“Mother, if I have this child, I won’t be able to put myself through college… I can’t, I just won’t have the time. Didn’t you want me to become a nurse?”*

*“But I can’t… I won’t let you do this!”*

*“You think you have power over me, then? Is that it?”*

*“You’re talking about killing a child!”*

*“It’s not a child until I give birth to it. It’s my choice.”*

*“I don’t know what to tell you, Emi-chan. I suppose I was wrong for trying to force you.”*

*“No… no, there’s still time. I won’t take any rash actions. I’m sorry, Mother..”*

---

It had been years since Ayukawa had even looked at her deck, but she felt like she had to now for some reason.

*“Fallen Angel Nurse — Reficul”…*

Whereas many of her fellow students took careers in universities and hospitals, Ayukawa found herself becoming a consulting nurse in a school that was teaching courses in a trading card game that had become a worldwide phenomenon. Before she knew it, she was a teacher at Duel Academy.

All the spoils that she'd gotten from this life path, at the seeming sacrifice of the knowledge of one life.

"Ayukawa-sensei…?"

Shougo was starting to get up.

"Shougo-kun!" Ayukawa put the card down and hurried to the patient's side. "Don't overexert yourself. You should rest more…"

"I'm sorry, Ayukawa-sensei," Shougo said. "I was pretending earlier."

"Pretending?"

"To sleep…"

Ayukawa gasped in shock. Shougo'd heard everything?

"Ayukawa-sensei… you should do it," Shougo said. "To a guy like that, it doesn't really matter

whether I know the truth or not. If you refuse to do it, he'd find some other way to get me there."

Ayukawa frowned and looked down.

"I know it's not any of my business," Shougo went on. "But… if you had a baby, don't you…" He halted mid-sentence, then pushed himself on. "Don't you want to know where he is?"

"Shougo-kun!" Ayukawa was momentarily angry.

"I'm sorry," Shougo shrank back.

"No…" the nurse calmed down a bit, then mustered up some compassion from inside and gave her student a smile. "It was a long time ago."

*This really is none of his business,* she thought to herself. *But then why am I so eager to open up to him?…*

---

*"I got sick again this morning, Mother…"*

*"Yes, that does happen. Emi-chan, there is still time…"*

*"Why have you changed your mind so easily, Mother? Is it seeing me in pain…?"*

*“Emi-chan, you should know that I never considered it suffering when I had you.”*

*“What is giving birth like?”*

*“Well…”*

*“It’s painful, isn’t it?”*

*“Can’t we talk about this later?”*

---

“It was when I was going to school, training to be a nurse,” Ayukawa said. ‘I fell in love with a man who made a lot of promises he couldn’t live up to.’ She frowned. “When I found out, he was gone. And I didn’t have a lot of options.”

Shougo looked off to the side. “I don’t have a lot of memories of my past life,” he admitted. “I kinda remember my mom, but only vaguely, like in a dream.”

Ayukawa looked at Shougo, and she thought she could see a strange strength emanate from him.

“I know she’d do anything for me, though,” Shougo went on. “And I’m afraid of what that

means. I wonder if she's still in this world. Would she look for me?"

"Shougo-kun…"

"That's why I think you should take the deal, Ayukawa-sensei," Shougo said, holding his wrist. "If he can really do this for you… show you where your child is…"

"But what about you? You can't go anywhere in your condition!"

Shougo looked at the machines he was connected to. "You could maybe ask a student to watch over me," he suggested. "Then it'd be okay, right?"

Ayukawa still looked conflicted, so Shougo leaned forward.

"Listen, Ayukawa-sensei… I know it's not fair that I deal with this," he said. "But that's something I chose for myself. I'll tell you what I told Tenjouin-sensei… suffering's not avoidable in life. If I die, then you don't have to worry about me anymore."

*This is crazy,* Ayukawa thought in a panic. *It doesn't make any sense! I can't let Shougo-kun go! I just can't!*

“You need someone to watch over Shougo-kun?” an unknown voice called.

Shougo and Ayukawa turned to the doorway to see Shiho Katsuki standing there.

She thumped her chest for dramatic effect. “I, Katsuki Shiho, will personally watch over Aoyama Shougo-kun!”

Shougo blinked. “Katsuki-san?…But, why?”

Katsuki laughed a bit. “Don’t get the wrong idea. It’s not like I like you or anything. It’s just… well, since you appeared, I’ve been seeing Toragami-sama a bit happier. And I think it’s probably because of you… and to see you this way, it’s just more than I can stand! So, I’ll do what I can.”

“Hold on a minute,” Ayukawa said. “I haven’t approved of anything just yet. So, don’t get too excited.”

Katsuki tilted her head a bit. “How long has it been since you slept, Ayukawa-kyouyuu?”

Ayukawa blinked a bit. Her face! Did it show that much?

“Maybe you haven’t made your decision yet, but you can at least get some rest, okay?” Katsuki went

on.

“I’ll wake you up before the time passes,” Shougo offered.

Ayukawa didn’t want to accept it, even though everything in her heart said to trust them. To trust these… children…

---

*“You’re going to have the child, Emi-chan?”*

*“I’m not going to have him. But I’ll bear him to term. I’ll give him up to a family who can raise him.”*

*“You’re going to have a connection to that boy, and it might hurt you in the future…”*

*“As long as the family who takes him in is kind and supportive, it’s okay. We have our own paths. Mine and my son’s… no, the child that I bear… we’re not going to walk the same path.”*

*“Emi-chan, are you sure?”*

*“I’ve thought about this for a long time, Mother. It’s my decision…”*

---

Ayukawa was awoken from her memory… her dream?

“You’re pretty lucky, Ayukawa-kyouyuu,” Katsuki remarked. “Even though Aoyama-kun is pretty sick, he’s the only person here right now who needs care. You can relax.”

Ayukawa smiled a bit. “You’d need more training before you can really take care of Shougo-kun,” she said.

“Mmm, well, nursing does interest me,” Katsuki replied. “Although I don’t know if I have the personality for it.”

Shougo was sleeping.

“You were planning on watching him tonight, right?” Katsuki went on. “You’re not going to watch the finals.”

“I’d like to, but I really do need sleep sometime,” was Ayukawa’s reply.

“So I’ll watch him while he watches the finals, then,” Katsuki said. “Unless his condition gets worse while *I* sleep… would that be okay?”

Ayukawa bit her thumb nail, deep in thought. *You can leave it to Katsuki-san for now,* her thoughts

said. *She might not be trained, but she's got a good heart…*

"Man, Ayuawa-kyouyuu, you really are tired. You need to rest more. Leave Aoyama-kun to me…"

Ayukawa's thoughts swirled as she closed her eyes. Beyond her control, she was dreaming…

---

The students of Duel Academy were called to another assembly at 5pm.

Tenjouin greeted the students formally, then went straight to the point: the assembly was gathered to witness the selection of the brackets for the tournament. It was a single-elimination format with only one duel each match. Since both duelists would be selecting their decks before the match, time was a factor.

The board behind Tenjouin lighted up with the brackets.

***AINO NAOMI** vs. **TORAGAMI HINATA***
***MARK WALKER** vs. **ISABEL SUÁREZ***
***MASAKI GANRYU** vs. **MIZUNO KAGOME***
***ITOU TOMOYO** vs. **CHIBA KATSUROU***

“The exchange students have to fight each other?” some transfer students whispered to each other. “That doesn’t seem fair.”

“That happens sometimes in random seeds, though,” another remarked. “You can hardly complain.”

Mizuno smiled. *So I get the famous Masaki Ganryu as my first opponent,* she thought to herself. *When I defeat him, I’ll get a rematch against Toragami-sama, and this time, everyone will be watching!*

Chiba looked nervous. He had met Itou briefly when they were building their deck sets. He glanced at her. She was a charming Obelisk Blue with an endearing personality, from what he remembered. He didn’t want to fight her.

*But to carry through Shougo-kun’s wishes… I’ll face any challenge!*

Aino clenched her hands together. *Somehow I knew it would come out this way,* she thought to herself. *The world’s in a rush. I’m not going to keep you waiting anymore, Hinata-chan.*

“You have two hours to prepare,” Tenjouin said. “The tournament will start at 7pm sharp. Students

who plan on watching the finals need to come to the technology center as soon as possible to secure seating. Other interested parties will be watching as well, so seating is limited. If you are unable to find a seat, you can watch the matches on our closed-circuit channel. Thank you. That will be all."

And just like that, the Genex finals were underway.

---

When Tahuru arrived, the coin was not on the table.

Instead, Ayukawa was standing there to meet him.

"I've decided to decline your offer," she said. "But Shougo-kun will be attending the tournament under supervision."

Tahuru blinked. "Well, if he's going to the tournament anyway, then why don't you just let me tell you where your son is?"

Ayukawa shook her head. "I made my decision a long time ago. That if I were to have a child… I couldn't tell him I just gave up on him. Much less that I was actually considering ending his life. I was

the cradle that nurtured his existence… but that's the extent of my role. I'm not going to complicate his life anymore."

Tahuru grit his teeth. He didn't appear to like her tone.

"You tried to tempt me by appealing to my maternal instincts," Ayukawa went on. "But life is not about that. Even now, you're living your life as a gamble, Mitsuo Tahuru. Things are not going to go your way if you just keep trying."

Tahuru scoffed dismissively. "Well, if you want to be a fool, that's your prerogative. Since Aoyama Shougo will be there, I don't have any business with you any longer, it seems."

"There is one thing," Ayukawa said.

She then flipped his coin, which she had held in her hand, to him. He instinctively caught it.

"You should keep that as a reminder," she told him. "Stop playing games with your feelings, and with the feelings of others. Now please leave my office. Some people need their rest."

Tahuru just adjusted his glasses and went on his way, playing the coin in his pocket.

“Ayukawa-sensei,” Shougo said weakly from his room.

Katsuki, who was watching him, touched his shoulder. “Settle down there, kid,” she said. “Like she said, you need your rest.”

“But why didn’t you…?” Shougo pressed on.

Ayukawa smiled. “I don’t understand mother’s instincts or anything like that,” she admitted. ‘But I know that I don’t want to be a nuisance. If I showed up in my son’s life now, it would complicate things for him.’ Her voice choked up just then. “I do… I do want to see him. But it’s not to be.”

Shougo looked weary, and Katsuki forcefully made him lay down.

“Careful!” Ayukawa stammered, running into Shougo’s room. “Don’t use force!”

But Shougo shook his head and smiled. He didn’t say anymore.

*I’m going to live a life like you, Tenjouin-san,* Ayukawa said as she looked out the window. *With no regrets.*

---

***Shougo:*** *"I guess I'm going to be watching the finals after all."*
***Katsuki:*** *"Don't worry, Shougo-kun, I'll keep an eye on ya. But you gotta promise not to pass out on me for this fight!"*
***Chiba:*** *"The first fight of the finals begins with one that we've all been both eager and fearful to see. Two childhood friends fighting against each other."*
***Isabel:*** *"And Aino-san says she's going to do her best to win? Come to think of it, I have never seen her deck."*
***Katsuki:*** *"It doesn't help that Naomi-chan is using a deck I* know *will push Toragami-sama's buttons! What exactly is she trying to prove? Wait… could it be that she…?"*
***Shougo:*** *"I'm not sure what's going on, but somehow I can feel the cards speak the truth to me. That's what you'll have to look forward to next turn on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'The Limits of Omniscience! Aino vs. Toragami'****."*
***Tenjouin:*** *"Duel… standby."*

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Fallen Angel Nurse — Reficul"***
Level 4 dark angel, attack points 1400, defense

points 600. When this card is on the field, effects that would heal the opponent do damage to them instead. Use this with cards like “Soul Taker” and “Rich Goblin” to give yourself an advantage while doing harm to your opponent. She can be very helpful in the right situation if you can keep her alive!

# 38. Limits of Omniscience! Aino vs Toragami

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*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to e-mail me your thoughts (vm_). Thank you very much for reading.*

---

"Alright, you'll be dueling using a Duel Arena system, Aino-san," the technician said, indicating a replica for demonstration purposes. "Instead of a Duel Disk, you'll be using a table like this one. The process should be self-explanatory, I hope, but if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask."

Naomi Aino nodded. “I think I have it. Thank you.”

Her mind, though, was not quite on the Duel Arena, but on her upcoming duel. She had a feeling, in her heart, that her first duel in the finals would be against Toragami. She never expected it to come true, but now that it did, that feeling turned into a sickening sense of dread.

*I don’t expect to win this duel, but I have to try my best. Hinata-chan, I still remember those words you told me that day. I don’t expect you to duel me like a friend. But all the same, I will try my best! Just as I always have, and as I always will.*

“Excuse me, Aino-san?” The technician was trying to get her attention.

“Oh, I’m sorry?”

“Please select 40 cards from your base deck,” the technician said.

“Oh, yes.” Aino didn’t need to think twice. She already knew which cards she’d be using. In less than a minute, she had formed her deck, and gave it to the technician, who would shuffle it and place it on her platform.

“Now, please wait until you are called upon to enter the Arena. And good luck.”

Aino nodded and took in a deep breath, and let it out in an exhale.

*It’s only a matter of time now… before the truth is laid out for all to see.*

---

***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Finals***
***Turn 38: “The Limits of Omniscience! Aino vs. Toragami”***

---

“Now you remember, if you feel bad at all, tell me,” Katsuki said as she wheeled Shougo to the arena stadium. “We can’t take any risks with you.”

“Uhm… okay.” Shougo blushed, embarassed by the thought of himself being pushed around in a wheelchair by Katsuki. But that was what was happening.

“Get over yourself, Shougo-kun,” Katsuki harrumphed. “I’m as embarassed as you.”

“I’m just sorry to put you out of your way,” Shougo said. “I know if one of your friends saw you hauling around an Osiris like me…”

“Like I care what those pedestrian fools think!” Katsuki turned up her nose as she helped Shougo out of the chair and into his seat. “My only loyalty is to Toragami-sama. That’s why I’m helping you.”

“Thank you, Katsuki-san,” Shougo said.

Katsuki smiled in spite of herself and went to put the wheelchair away.

---

Behind the scenes, Kiyotaki and the three head professors were assembled.

“We have the announcer set,” Abe said. “Everything’s ready, Kiyotaki-san.”

Kiyotaki nodded. “And the security measures?”

“Nobody’s getting through that doesn’t belong,” Matsutani replied. “You have my word on that. I have my best guards on watch.”

“With Aoyama-kun in the audience, we can’t be too careful,” Kiyotaki said. “That man is still at

large, and we don’t know where he is. He may attempt to take Aoyama-kun’s life again.”

Matsutani and Abe nodded. Kiyotaki looked to Tenjouin, who still looked uneasy.

“I know there’s nothing I can say that will get you to trust me,” Kiyotaki went on. “But this tournament is going to proceed whether you want it to or not. At the very least, as a true duelist, you should witness the feelings of your students.”

“This isn’t a game, Kiyotaki-kouchou,” Tenjouin replied starkly. “We’re risking a student’s life here. I did not approve the measures you took to get Shougo-kun to come.”

“As the chancellor, I was not aware they required your approval,” Kiyotaki replied.

Tenjouin just shook her head and turned her sight to the tournament. There was no point in discussing matters further.

---

“And now for the Genex finals to begin with the first duel of round one!” The announcer’s pitch got higher as he began to lay out the match-up. “On one side of the arena, we have second year Obelisk Blue

student, high ranking duelist and elite of the community, Aino Naomi!”

Uncertain murmurs mixed with cheers came from the crowd as Aino was raised up to the dueling platform. She didn’t care — her focus was on the empty platform in front of her, where her opponent would soon be.

While her face was too far away for Shougo and Katsuki to see clearly, it was broadcast on a closed circuit television set above the Duel Arena.

“I’m so conflicted,” Katsuki admitted. “I don’t know if I should be cheering.”

“Aino-san’s your friend, too, right?” Shougo asked.

“Yes, but… you just don’t understand.” Katsuki sighed.

“I do understand,” Shougo replied. “Her opponent’s a good friend. But, that’s what duels are about, right? Chiba-kun taught me that.”

“Well, you two are boys!” Katsuki seemed flustered. “With girls, it’s different!”

“Why?” Shougo gently pressed.

“It just is!” Katsuki shouted in a way that seemed to say ‘Don’t press any more’, so Shougo just left it at that.

“And her opponent, also a second year Obelisk, and the young woman on whom many hopes are pinned, the future elite star of the dueling community, the one, the only TORAGAMI HINATAAAA!”

As expected, Toragami appeared, stern countenance and all. The crowd erupted in cheers. It was clear who they supported.

Aino felt a deep fever form in her heart and struggled to keep her confidence. She looked Toragami right in the eye, and was met back with a cold gaze. Flustered, she dropped her eyes down to her deck. Her entire body was quivering.

Toragami’s gaze never left Aino, who felt like a beam of light was focused on her, wearing her down. She thought she was prepared to face her, but she never expected it to feel like this.

“Do you remember?” Toragami asked.

“Wh… what?” Aino asked, but she knew what Toragami was referring to.

“What I told you that day,” Toragami went on. “What would happen the day we became opponents.”

“I remember,” Aino replied. “But, I couldn’t run away from this. I…”

“You could have done the report,” Toragami interrupted her. “You are intelligent enough to have done that. Instead, you chose to enter the tournament.”

“Well, some lively banter from our duelists,” the announcer interjected. “But it’s about time for the match to begin! Duel… START!”

The two duelists drew their five cards, which signalled the beginning of the Duel.

“Dice Roll,” the Duel System said as a pair of dice appeared behind Aino and Toragami, flashing repeatedly. Finally, the result came out: Toragami had rolled a 3, while Aino got a 4.

“I choose to take the first turn,” Aino said simply, her eyes not quite affixed on Toragami, but enough so that observers could believe she was looking her in the eye.

“That’s the best move for you,” Toragami replied as she took her card. “Even if I know the hand you have, I can’t do anything about you having the advantage.”

Aino stared at her hand, and took a deep breath, then exhaled. She closed her eyes.

“Hinata-chan,” she said.

Katsuki gasped. “Naomi-chan, what are you doing?” she stammered.

“What?” Shougo looked confused. “They’re good friends, aren’t they?”

“But that’s still Toragami Hinata she’s addressing,” Katsuki protested. “In public, Aino-san still has to recognize that.”

Shougo narrowed his eyes. He felt something form in the pit of his stomach. *What’s this feeling I have… this dark sense of despair…*

*…could it be Darkness?*

“Shougo-kun, are you okay?” Katsuki asked. “Remember, you’re supposed to tell me if you feel anything.”

“I do feel something, but not in my body,” Shougo admitted, although he was only half-serious about not feeling it in his body. “There’s something strong in this duel. A really bad feeling. Like neither of them want to do this.”

“Well, Toragami-sama has to defeat anyone who opposes her,” Katsuki said. “Even if it’s…”

Aino opened her eyes, and this time her gaze was arighted. She was looking Toragami in the eye.

“Hinata-chan, I remember what you said,” Aino told her. “That’s why I’m going to try my best. Even if I cannot defeat you… I’m going to awaken that memory, before you lose it entirely.”

Toragami didn’t respond.

“‘That memory’?” Katsuki looked confused. “What is Aino-san talking about?”

Shougo’s eyes widened.

“Shougo-kun?” Katsuki noticed that Shougo’s eyes seemed to fade. “Shougo-kun, can you hear me?!”

But Shougo’s mind seemed to be somewhere else…

---

*“I win again, Naomi-chan!”*

*It was Hinata Toragami and Naomi Aino, but they were young: both were eleven. Shiho Katsuki was there too, at the same age.*

*“Wow, Hinata-chan is so good!” Shiho squealed.*

*Naomi laughed and blushed, embarassed. “Even when I try my hardest, I can’t beat you!”*

*Hinata looked flustered. “Well, you had some good moves too, Naomi-chan,” she said. “I just got lucky.” She seemed a far cry from the Hinata Toragami of today.*

*“No way,” Naomi reassured her. “You play some of the best players around. They come from all sides just to play you! Why are you getting down on yourself like that?”*

*“Can’t you tell? I pull the cards I need all the time.” Hinata sighed. “It’s like there’s some force guiding the right ones to my hand. I’ve never really faced a pinch before.”*

*“Oh, you were worried when Naomi-chan played that trap,” Shiho said with a laugh. “I could tell!”*

*“That’s just what I mean,” Hinata shouted. “I got the right card to beat her trap just then. What if I didn’t draw ‘Tempest’, hm?”*

*“But Hinata-chan, it’s not like ‘Tempest’ magically appeared in your deck,” Naomi reminded her. “You put it there yourself, after careful thought and consideration.”*

*Hinata sighed and looked down at the ground. “Speaking so grown-up,” she sighed. “Are we even eleven? Our parents have us grown up so fast.. to meet their expectations. I see other children my age and I’m jealous.”*

*“Hinata-chan, I think you’ve just been up too long,” Naomi said. “You just need some rest, and you’ll be your old self again.”*

*Hinata closed her eyes for a good while then opened them for a bit, eyes still cast on the ground. She then closed them again and turned to Naomi, smiling. “You’re right,” she said. “I just need some rest.”*

*Naomi and Shiho nodded.*

---

Shougo blinked as his vision ended.

He didn’t know what to make of it — the fact that he could see the young Aino, Toragami and Katsuki, or how he even knew it was them — and kept it to himself for now.

“Shougo-kun?” Katsuki asked once more.

“I’m okay,” Shougo said. “It must be these bright lights.”

“I’ll take the first turn, then,” Aino said, putting her hand on her deck while looking at her friend. “Draw…”

She looked at the card she drew, and bit her lip. Glanced at her hand once.

“I activate the magic card ‘Reinforcement’,” she said. “From my deck, I select 1 Level 4 or lower Warrior-type monster and add it to my hand.”

“Warrior monsters?” Katsuki blinked. “Strange. Aino-san’s never ran those before.”

Aino took her deck and fanned it out. “The card I choose…”

She selected a card and showed it to Toragami and the audience. Katsuki’s eyes widened, her expression showing nothing but shock.

“The card I choose is ‘The Creator Incarnate’,” Aino finished, and put the card in her hand. The Arena table automatically shuffled her deck for her.

“Katsuki-san… what’s wrong?” Shougo queried.

“Im… impossible,” Katsuki whispered. “She couldn’t be thinking…”

“I now summon ‘The Creator Incarnate’ in attack mode,” Aino went on.

A gold-plated warrior with what looked like a mirror holding a cape on his back appeared, larger than life on the Duel Arena. His head was covered with a Roman-looking helmet to match his armor, and he held a golden scimitar-esque sword by its blade somehow.

**The Creator Incarnate** — *LV4 Light Warrior (1600 ATK)*

“Oh dear!” Katsuki stammered. “Is she really going to…?”

Shougo seemed hypnotized. He could clearly see a black aura surrounding the card that Aino had just played.

*There’s no mistaking this feeling. Darkness… I thought I was rid of you! But now…*

*Now…*

Shougo stifled a scream as another vision assaulted his senses.

---

*“Hinata-chan!”*

*Hinata turned to see Naomi. She had found out somehow.*

*“Hinata-chan, what are you doing?!” Naomi took Hinata’s arm. “You’re not supposed to be leaving the family household at night!”*

*Hinata sighed and smiled. “I never sleep more than four hours a day anyway,” she confessed. “So I can get back to the mansion on time for my classes and training. Until then… I want to test my true strength. I want to see if I’m really strong.”*

*“You’re taking your deck and Duel Disk,” Naomi observed. “Could it be… are you going to duel?”*

*“One of these days, I’m going to be dueling for my family,” Hinata replied. “Until then, it’s better to be sure, isn’t it? Besides, no one will know who I am. Nobody outside of the* zaibatsu *even knows that the Toragami clan have a successor yet. Don’t worry!”*

*“But, Hinata-chan…!”*

*Hinata ran off into the distance. “Don’t tell anybody, Naomi-chan,” she had said before she left. “I promise I’ll be alright…”*

---

“Shougo-kun?!” Katsuki shouted. “You can’t hide it from me. Something’s wrong. Spill it!”

“I don’t understand what’s going on,” Shougo replied. “But Aino-san’s cards… when she plays them, I can see a dark aura around them. And when I try to look closer, I have these visions like dreams.”

“Maybe we’d better take you back to the medical office…” Katsuki said uneasily.

“No!” Shougo protested. “I think it’s important. The people in the visions, they’re Toragami-san and Aino-san, but… younger…”

“So, you saw it too,” Katsuki bit her thumb and looked on the duel field. “Not in so many words, but… you can tell, can’t you? The deck Aino-san is using now is not her own deck.”

“Not her own deck?” Shougo repeated. “But if not hers, then whose…?”

“That’s a good question,” a familiar voice called. Chiba was standing next to the two.

“Chiba-san!” Shougo gasped. “Shouldn’t you be with the other finalists?”

“They explained how the Duel Arena works to us, and then said we were free to watch the finals if we wished,” Chiba said. “I wanted to see my friend, of course. Imagine my surprise when I was told that Katsuki-san was taking care of you!”

“It’s not like that…” Katsuki protested.

“But you can see those auras, too?” Chiba asked Shougo.

“Well, I could *see* it just now, but not anymore,” Shougo replied. “It’s more like I can feel it most of the time.”

Katsuki crossed her hands together. “It’s not a surprise that you can feel it,” she said. “I can see that Aino-san is terrified. It makes me wonder why she fought so hard to get into the finals.”

“I set two cards facedown to end my turn,” Aino said.

“So it appears Aino is running a deck based on ‘The Creator’,” the announcer shouted. “But she

doesn’t seem to have drawn the key card just yet. Will her facedowns protect her?! Let’s see. It’s Toragami-sama’s turn!”

“Draw,” Toragami said. “Aino-san, we both know… that I know your plan.”

“I know,” Aino replied.

“You will not succeed,” Toragami replied. “Like Katsuki-san, you are not playing to win. If you do not understand that the goal of all games is to win, you will not achieve your dreams. Understand this, Aino-san.”

“No, I don’t believe that,” Aino replied. “Even if I have no chance in victory here, I can still awaken the light of hope that I’m trying to find. The one that’s been sleeping for five years.”

“Such a thing cannot exist in this world,” Toragami scoffed.

Chiba appeared most perplexed. “Why? Why is she talking that way to a friend?”

“Osiris Red students have it easy,” Katsuki answered with a sigh. “They don’t know that with all the amenities of being accepted into Obelisk Blue

comes the burden of expectation. Aino-san and Toragami-sama have heavy crosses to bear."

Shougo's eyes crossed momentarily, as if everything were snapping into place. "That's it!" he said. "The cards that Aino-san is using… I know why I feel that blackness."

"Blackness?" Chiba asked.

"These cards are not Aino-san's, as Katsuki-san said," Shougo went on. "They're… they're Toragami-san's old cards!"

Chiba gasped. "Old cards?"

"You figured it out?!" Katsuki turned to Shougo and then just nodded in affirmation. "Look, no one other than you two can know. But yes… Aino-san's cards, those are cards Toragami-san used to play. It was not dissimilar to her deck now. She'd place many cards in the cemetery, then use 'The Creator' to bring them back. But that's not her true ace."

"True ace?" Shougo's eyes were fixed on the duel now, as were Chiba's.

"I'd feel wrong in telling you anymore. Let's just watch the duel."

Shougo clenched his forehead, though, appearing to be in great pain.

“You really should go back to the medical office!” Katsuki cried. “You’re not ready for this!”

“No… I can… I must…”

*There’s a voice in my head, and it’s laughing,* he thought in his own mind. The laughter resounded. Mocking, scornful laughter. *It’s directed… at Toragami-san. Why? I need to watch this…*

*…I feel it’s the only way… that I can find the answer…*

Toragami then blinked heavily once, and made a declaration.

“I will have this duel won in five turns,” she said, to the surprise of everyone. “And you will have not achieved your goal. And those words that I spoke will be fulfilled. Not even your passionate feelings can stop this, Aino-san.”

She then began to play her first move.

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***Katsuki:*** *"Aino-san, I can't believe you would do this! What are you thinking?"*
***Shougo:*** *"I don't know why, but I keep having these visions with each card Aino-san plays…"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"But Toragami-san doesn't seem to be swayed. She makes her moves against Aino-san like she were any other person, and then she makes a stunning declaration."*
***Katsuki:*** *"When did you say that, Toragami-sama? That just* can't *be true!"*
***Shougo:*** *"Meanwhile, through the cards that Aino-san and Toragami-san play, the story of Toragami-san's youth is also played out, along with the tragedy that caused her to become an ally of the Light of Ruin."*
***Chiba:*** *"Toragami-san, I can't believe you would be so heartless. I feel as though the vow I made when you dueled Judai-sama is going to come true! But still… why…?"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"Will an old and passionate friendship be killed so simply by the rigors of the battlefield? Find out on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Stolen Youth, Forsaken Smile'****. Duel… standby."*

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"The Creator Incarnate"***

Level 4 light warrior, attack points 1600, defense points 1500. Katsuki seemed to recognize this card when Aino played it. From what I remember, it summons a monster called "The Creator", but I suppose it's not in Aino's hand yet. Can she defend it from Toragami's assault next turn?

---

**CARDS USED BY NAOMI AINO:**

**REINFORCEMENT** *(TCG name: Reinforcement of the Army)*
*Normal Magic*
Add 1 Level 4 or lower Warrior-type monster from your Deck to your hand.

**THE CREATOR INCARNATE**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1600/1500)*
You can sacrifice this monster to Special Summon 1 "The Creator" from your hand.

# 39. Stolen Youth, Forsaken Smile

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*The non-original characters in this fanfiction are copyrighted to Kazuki Takahashi, Studio Gallup and Toei where applicable. All other characters are considered public domain by the author and may be used freely, but he does request that you ask permission as a courtesy.*

*The card names used are translations of the Official Card Game (OCG) names. For the TCG names, see the "Cards used" at the end of the story. And don't forget to leave a comment. Thank you very much for reading.*

*Huge thanks to ScarletWeather for writing the flashback portions as well as his continued support of my story.*

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"The card I choose is 'The Creator Incarnate'," Aino finished, and put the card in her hand. The Arena table automatically shuffled her deck for her.

"Katsuki-san… what's wrong?" Shougo asked.

“Im… impossible,” Katsuki whispered. “She couldn’t be thinking…”

“I now summon ‘The Creator Incarnate’ in attack mode,” Aino went on.

“Oh dear!” Katsuki stammered. “Is she really going to…?”

Shougo seemed hypnotized. He could clearly see a black aura surrounding the card that Aino had just played.

*There’s no mistaking this feeling. Darkness… I thought I was rid of you! But now…*

“I set two cards facedown to end my turn,” Aino said.

“So it appears Aino is running a deck based on ‘The Creator’,” the announcer shouted. “But she doesn’t seem to have drawn the key card just yet. Will her facedowns protect her?! Let’s see. It’s Toragami-sama’s turn!”

“Draw,” Toragami said. “Aino-san, we both know… that I know your plan.”

“I know,” Aino replied.

“You will not succeed,” Toragami replied. “Like Katsuki-san, you are not playing to win. If you do not understand that the goal of all games is to win, you will not achieve your dreams. Understand this, Aino-san.”

“These cards are not Aino-san’s, as Katsuki-san said,” Shougo went on. “They’re… they’re Toragami-san’s old cards!”

Chiba gasped. “Old cards?”

Shougo clenched his forehead, though, appearing to be in great pain.

“You really should go back to the medical office!” Katsuki cried. “You’re not ready for this!”

“No… I can… I must…”

*There’s a voice in my head, and it’s laughing*, he thought in his own mind. The laughter resounded. Mocking, scornful laughter. *It’s directed… at Toragami-san. Why? I need to watch this…*

*…I feel it’s the only way… that I can find the answer…*

Toragami then blinked heavily once, and made a declaration.

“I will have this duel won in five turns,” she said, to the surprise of everyone. “And you will have not achieved your goal. And those words that I spoke will be fulfilled. Not even your passionate feelings can stop this, Aino-san.”

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Finals***
***Turn 39: “Stolen Youth, Forsaken Smile”***

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“Your set cards are not ones that can stop my attack,” Toragami said. “The set card to my left is ‘My Body as a Shield’. In case I summoned ‘Lightlord Magician Leila’ to destroy your other set card, perhaps? But that is a high cost.”

Aino tried to remain stoic as Toragami revealed her foreknowledge.

“The card to your right, ‘Land of Demise’,” Toragami went on. “If my Lightlord effects bring out a Beast Wolf, you can activate a field magic card from your deck. Perhaps ‘Mausoleum of the Deceased Emperor’?”

Everyone in the crowd was heard to murmur.

“Toragami-san can see the future?” one said.

“No, it’s got to be a bluff,” another responded.

Shougo and Aino both knew it was no bluff.

“Do you mean… Toragami-sama isn’t lying, is she?” Katsuki gasped.

“I think you know that very well,” Shougo said, his eyes continuing to focus on the duel. “She has a special ability that’s beyond knowledge.”

“There’s a part of her that is no longer human,” Chiba added. “And she’s putting it on public display. What could this mean?”

Katsuki seemed shocked. “No longer… human?”

“I summon ‘Lightlord Paladin Jean’ in attack mode,” Toragami went on. The armored, genderless warrior appeared on the field with little fanfare.

**Lightlord Paladin Jean** — *LV4 Light Warrior (1800 ATK)*

“Jean, destroy The Creator Incarnate with Light of Freedom!”

Jean rushed Aino’s monster and slashed it with her sword. Before she did, her sword began to glow.

“When Jean attacks an opponent’s monster, her attack power is raised by 300 points,” Toragami explained.

**Lightlord Paladin Jean** — *1800 ATK + 300 = 2100 ATK*

Aino shielded her arms as a wave of air accompanied her monster’s destruction. She almost felt the pain of the hologram.

**Aino** — *4000 LP — 500 = 3500 LP*

“What were you hoping to prove to me by sacrificing your monster and your life points?” Toragami turned her head. “If you are serious about defeating me, please do not think you can stir up memories of my past.”

“I would not insult you like that, Toragami-sama,” Aino said as she held her cards tightly.

Toragami narrowed her eyes. “But you would insult me by addressing me as ‘Hinata-chan’?”

Aino looked down off to her side.

“Save your words; I already know them,” Toragami said gruffly. “After setting two cards, I will end my turn.”

“I don’t understand what Toragami-san is doing,” Tenjouin observed. “Is she trying to get inside Aino-san’s head?”

“I admit I’m at a loss myself,” Kiyotaki said. “By calling Aino-san’s cards, there are those who will accuse Toragami-san of cheating.”

“But that’s not possible!” Matsutani asserted. “We’ve made sure of it!”

“Nevertheless, that won’t stop them,” Abe sighed. “Especially those who hold a grudge against the Toragami *zaibatsu*.”

“Now, because of Lightlord Paladin Jean’s effect, I must send the top two cards of my deck to the cemetery,” Toragami said. She took the cards off her deck and looked at them. “And one of those cards is ‘Lightlord Beast Wolf’; I must Special Summon it to the field.”

Placing her other card, “Honest”, into the cemetery, Toragami summoned the monster, who looked larger than life in the Duel Arena, wielding his staff weapon menacingly.

**Lightlord Beast Wolf** — *LV4 Light Beast-Warrior (2100 ATK)*

“That triggers my magic card, Toragami-sama,” Aino said. “Reverse card open, ‘Land of Demise’. As you said, I can play this when you Special Summon a monster, and play a field magic from my deck. I choose ‘Mausoleum of the Deceased Emperor’.”

The background around the two duelists became a tomb, with ceremonial lights illuminating the dank scenery. Aino was flanked by two obelisks, with stone statues guarding both obelisks. Behind her, between the obelisks, a flame burned.

Shougo was once again overwhelmed with the dark aura that he saw in Aino’s cards, and another vision came to him…

---

*The arena was noisy and filled with shouting people, some taking bets on the two duelists playing in a cage in the center of the area, some shouting encouragements or insults. Occasionally, someone would throw a bottle of something at the cage. It would always break to pieces before it could reach either player, the contents harmlessly spattering over the floor as a few stray fragments of glass ricocheted away.*

*Toragami was probably the only silent person in the room. Sneaking out had been surprisingly easy. After that, she had followed the first person with a duel disk that she saw, and her footsteps had led her here. It wasn't as scary as the underground arenas she'd heard people talk about. It was more like a bunch of amateur duelists getting together off the street to duel for a wild crowd. She smiled. Here was a place where she could see if she was really strong.*

*Suddenly, she felt a hand on her shoulder. She turned around slowly to see a man dressed in a pinstriped suit and fedora wearing a large pair of sunglasses. "Excuse me, but we'd like you to come with us for a moment."*

*Toragami glanced around. Several members of the crowd had surrounded her, mostly younger men. All of them were wearing sunglasses. A few were grinning.*

*"And what if I don't want to?" Her voice trembled slightly and she tried to disguise the fear in her eyes.*

*The man in the suit grinned. "Well then, that would be very unfortunate for you, wouldn't it?"*

*Toragami looked at the rest of the crowd. Their attentions were focused on the two dueling in the cage. There was no chance that she would get help from them.*

*The young duelist bowed her head reluctantly and followed the man in the fedora as the others surrounded her.*

---

Shougo held his head. “Katsuki-san,” he said. “How much do you know about Aino-san’s relationship with Toragami-san?”

“What business is it…” Katsuki began impulsively and then stopped herself. She decided to answer honestly. “Well, the relationship of the Aino and Toragami families go way back. To be honest, when I met Toragami-sama, Aino-san had already been friends with her for awhile.”

Shougo’s voice went down a shade. “I think I may be seeing some harsh event in Toragami-san’s past,” he said. “The emotions I feel… they’re very strong.”

“Shougo-kun…” was all Katsuki was able to say before she wrung her hands in silent prayer and

turned her attention back to the duel. *Aino-san… stay strong! Toragami-sama, please don't treat her like just any other opponent!*

"It's my turn," Aino said. 'Draw.' She looked at the card she drew and played it immediately. "'Trade-In', activate. In exchange for a level 8 monster in my hand, I can draw two cards."

"She had a level 8 monster?" Chiba shouted incredulously. "If she did, why not play it with 'Mausoleum'?"

"The card I discard… is 'Archangel Christia'," Aino said, showing Toragami the card before putting it in her cemetery pile.

"That card?!" Katsuki shouted.

Shougo noticed Katsuki's reaction. *That must be it… the 'true ace' she was referring to earlier. Why* would *Aino-san discard that now?*

"I now draw two cards," Aino went on, looking at her new hand. "And by paying 1000 life points, I can activate the effect of 'Mausoleum of the Deceased Emperor'."

**Aino** — *3500 LP — 1000 = 2500 LP*

“I can normal summon one monster from my hand without offering sacrifice,” Aino explained.

“Could it be she drew ‘The Creator’?” Katsuki gasped. “Was she hoping she’d draw it?”

Shougo noticed the field magic card on the field had that sickly black aura too, and before he knew it, he was pulled into another vision.

---

*Toragami shivered slightly, maybe from fear or maybe from the cold. She couldn’t tell. The warehouse she was trapped in was damp. The men who had surrounded her were standing off to the side — except for one.*

*“Toragami Hinata, heir to the Toragami zaibatsu. Nice of you to provide us with such a privileged guest for the evening.”*

*Toragami managed to regain her composure slightly. “How do you know who I am?”*

*“Never mind that,” the man facing her replied before waving his hand vaguely. “All you need to know is that we wanted to give you a little… ‘test’.”*

*“‘Test’?” Toragami asked. She couldn’t hide the note of anxiety in her voice.*

*The man grinned as he walked off. Two of the others, following him, escorted her to a duel arena that was in the center of the warehouse. “This arena,” the man explained, “has some special rules.”*

*Before Toragami could ask what he meant, a pair of shackles shot from the sides of the arena and clamped to her ankles.*

*“This is an older arena, designed and stored here by the creator of Duel Monsters himself,” the man explained. “It’s so old that the original device he intended to use as a penalty for the loser is broken. Now look up…”*

*Toragami lifted her head. A massive steel beam was suspended above her. If it fell from that height, she’d be crushed. She looked over her opponent — a similar beam was suspended above him. She noticed that a pair of shackles had clamped to the legs of the man who had been talking to her.*

*“We’re going to duel, you and I,” the man explained. “And here’s how it’s going to work. Those*

*steel beams up there are held in place by four electromagnets. Do you know how those work?"*

*Toragami nodded, her face turning pale.*

*"Now, only one magnet is needed to keep these things from crashing down on us. But every time we lose a thousand life points, my friends back there will turn off the power to one of the magnets. So when somebody loses all their life points…"*

*Toragami gasped.*

*"Now, now, don't act so frightened," the man grinned. "After all, isn't your family trying to conquer the world of dueling? If that's true, you must be pretty strong, so you shouldn't have anything to worry about."*

*The men standing outside the arena laughed.*

---

"I summon 'The Creator' in attack mode," Aino's voice broke Shougo out of the vision.

A large angelic being arose to the field, body colored entirely in red with a ring behind it. Its hands seemed to hold, as its name suggested, the power of creation itself, and the Duel Arena made it

all the more enormous. Aino herself looked palpably shocked at its entrance.

**The Creator** — *LV8 Light Thunder (2300 ATK)*

“And now I activate The Creator’s effect,” Aino went on. “By sending ‘Gravekeeper’s Spy’ from my hand to the cemetery, I can Special Summon one monster in my cemetery.”

A white-armored, red-winged angel took form on the field beside “The Creator”, as if the latter had brought her into being with just its thought.

“Resurrect, ‘Archangel Christia’!” Aino shouted.

**Archangel Christia** — *LV8 Light Angel (2800 ATK)*

“Two powerful monsters! This is a turnaround!” Chiba said, duly impressed.

“Don’t get excited just yet,” Katsuki reminded him. “Toragami-sama still has two facedown cards.”

Indeed, Toragami looked unconcerned about the monsters; rather, her face showed hints of exasperation.

“Aino-san, you’ve summoned Archangel Christia, but you seem to have forgotten that her

effect seals off the effect of The Creator," she said. "Neither player can Special Summon when she's on the field."

"I haven't forgotten," Aino replied.

"Then perhaps your point was to cause me to recall my life as a child?" Toragami shook her head. "That is the past, and it no longer exists."

"I don't believe that's true," Aino said. "I think the person you know as a child is still there today, somewhere. I know it's true. Toragami-sama… no, Hinata-chan… whatever force you have that allows you to see through everyone's strategy is going to consume you. Please wake up! I want to see your smile again!"

Toragami turned her head and scoffed. "You're just like that boy," she said. "You assume that my ability to see through what is hidden is because of the Light. You don't understand anything. Do you really remember what I told you that day?"

Aino nodded, but her eyes had become misty.

"Tell us," Toragami said, compelling her opponent.

Aino bit her lip and looked down at the field, and her hand. She tried very hard to hide her tears. “The day we became opponents would be the day our friendship ends,” she said quietly.

“Wh… what?!” Katsuki shouted, gripping the seat in front of her and standing up. “No! That’s not true! Toragami-sama would *never* say anything like that!”

“Calm down, Katsuki-san,” Shougo said.

Katsuki snapped her head towards the Osiris student and was about to yell at him when she saw the tears in his eyes, too.

“Opponents cannot be friends,” Toragami stated. “If you came here to fight me, you should know that. So, Aino-san… will you attack me?”

“Archangel Christia!” Aino shouted, pushing her hand out. “Attack Toragami-sama’s Beast Wolf!”

Christia soared in the air with a shout, and rushed towards Toragami’s Beast Wolf.

But Shougo’s eyes were only on the card hologram on the field…

---

*“I… I-I end my turn.”*

*The young Toragami was shivering in terror. Her opponent had only summoned a “Killer Tomato” in defense position, but even so… she obviously didn’t want to kill him. Every few minutes she’d look up at the ceiling in fright.*

*“Don’t be so squeamish, Toragami-sama,” the man said mockingly as he drew. “After all, I wouldn’t have proposed this wager unless I was willing to die. Or perhaps you’re just too scared of dying yourself? If you are, I could always let you go, and you could run away like the weakling you really are…”*

*“Shut up!” Tears were beginning to form in Toragami’s eyes. “Shut up, shut up, shut up!”*

*The man gave another crocodile grin. “‘Killer Tomato’ switches to attack position and attacks your face-down monster.”*

*Toragami gave a sigh of relief as her monster flipped face-up. “G-Gravekeeper’s Spy’s monster effect activates. I special summon a second ‘Gravekeeper’s’ monster from my deck.” A second spy appeared beside the first one.*

*To her surprise, the man began to laugh. "That's exactly what I hoped for…"*

*Both spies began to scream in agony as they suddenly caught fire. The flames leapt to the sky and began to change, transforming into a screaming giant made from molten lava. Toragami realized she was trapped in a cage on the giant's neck. "What is this?"*

*"My Lava Golem," the man replied. "I release two of your monsters to summon it to your field. During your standby phase, it will inflict one thousand points of damage to your life points. I set one card and end my turn."*

*Toragami's hand began to shake as she drew. If she didn't win this duel quickly, the Golem would guarantee a loss in four turns. "Lava Golem, attack Killer Tomato!" she ordered. She noticed her life points ticking down as she gave the command, and she heard a sound above her — one of the magnets turning off?*

*The giant monster gathered flames to its mouth and delivered a single blast of flame. However, the fireball was intercepted — a large wheel with some sort of spikes attached to it plowed through the burst*

*and landed on top of the giant, causing it to bow its head to the ground.*

*"My 'Torture Wheel' prevents your monster from attacking," the man cackled. "And furthermore, you will lose five hundred life points during each of my standby phases."*

*Toragami's vision began to blur as she looked at the cards in her hands.*

*The men surrounding her laughed…*

*Meanwhile, the two men standing by the circuit breaker near the back of the warehouse chuckled. "Look at her. She's about ready to piss her pants," one scoffed. "He's really got her goin'."*

*The other nodded in agreement. "She's so scared; she doesn't realize we don't even have a killswitch." They both started laughing.*

*Their laughter was suddenly interrupted by a harsh voice. "Excuse us."*

*Both thugs turned to stare at a very angry looking Aino, flanked by two members of the city's police department.*

---

Shougo looked depressed as Toragami's past was laid out for him. Someone like him couldn't hope to understand that kind of situation; or at least, that's how he felt.

A loud noise pierced his senses.

"Reverse card open, 'Command Silencer'," Toragami said in her characteristic monotone. "Your attack is cancelled, and I draw one card from my deck."

A noisewave disrupted Christia's attack on Beast Wolf, and she backed off, returning to her position on Aino's side of the field.

"You've been in this situation before," Toragami went on. "Do you wish to test me by making another attack?"

Aino bit her lip and moaned.

"Well, I don't understand," Chiba mused. "We've seen Toragami-san's deck. If Aino-san were worried about 'Holy Barrier — Mirror Force'…"

"This is a combo that Toragami-sama likes to play," Katsuki explained. "When her opponents have two monsters, she draws their attacks out by using

‘Command Silencer’ first to get a card, then ‘Mirror Force’ when they attack again.”

“That’s a small gain for two entire cards, though,” Chiba said, evidently still confused.

“Not if you know what cards you’re going to draw.” Shougo continued to observe the duel with rapt reverence. “But now there’s a mind game going on between them. Aino-san wants to end this as quickly as possible, but she’s stuck in a bind.”

Tenjouin crossed her arms. “That’s a good move,” she said, seeing through the strategy. “But what kind of a heartless thing is that for Toragami-san to say?”

Kiyotaki sighed heavily. *What exactly are your plans, Toragami Hinata? I cannot see through them.*

Aino’s expression looked increasingly sour as she looked over her hand.

“Remember… this is the second turn,” Toragami said. “You should decide on what to do while you still have time.”

Aino just looked resigned. “I set one card facedown,” she said, concluding her Battle Phase. “Turn end.”

“This is strange,” Shougo pondered out loud now. “If Aino-san were worried about ‘Mirror Force’, why not summon ‘The Creator’ in defense position?”

“Toragami-san’s thrown her off of her normal game,” Chiba sighed. “That much is obvious from her deck choice, but now…”

Katsuki looked around her. Some of the people watching the duel could see what was going on, but not most. Most were simply eager to see two friends fight to the finish. They had no idea what this duel really meant to them… and to her.

*Toragami-sama… you can’t be as cold as this. I believe in you.*

---

***Shougo:*** *“Is this really the only way to absolve the past?”*
***Tenjouin:*** *“The duel between Aino-san and Toragami-san continues, as each make their move to win with heavy hearts.”*
***Chiba:*** *“If Toragami-san has a heavy heart, I’m not seeing it… she’s being brutal!”*
***Shougo:*** *“What the Light of Ruin twisted my rival into is becoming clear to me… and I understand*

*Darkness' intentions now. But I'm not going to succumb to that!"*
***Katsuki:*** *"Shougo-kun, what the hell are you talking about?"*
***Shougo:*** *"Katsuki-san, something more important than the world is at stake at this duel. We're talking about a simple friendship between two young duelists. Chiba-kun, I know you can see the Light too, so you know…"*
***Chiba:*** *"That aura… could it be…?"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"The language of the duelist is a direct one, and the result of the duel will come out. Who will be victorious in the end? Everything — the duel, the friendship, and the fate of duelists everywhere — will be decided next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'One'****. Duel… standby."*

---

**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Archangel Christia"***

Level 8 light angel, attack points 2800, defense points 2300. With 4 angel type monsters in the cemetery, you can special summon this and return 1 angel monster to your hand. It also prohibits special summons. Was this Toragami-san's true ace?

## CARDS USED BY NAOMI AINO:

**THE CREATOR INCARNATE**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1600/1500)*
You can sacrifice this monster to Special Summon 1 "The Creator" from your hand.

**LAND OF DEMISE** *(TCG name: "Demise of the Land")*
*Instant Magic*
Activate only when your opponent Special Summons a monster. Select 1 Field Magic card from your Deck and activate it.

**MAUSOLEUM OF THE DECEASED EMPEROR** *(TCG name: "Mausoleum of the Emperor". Note: This card has a different effect in the actual game.)*
*Field Magic*
Once per turn, by paying 1000 Life Points, the turn player can Normal Summon or Set a monster without offering sacrifices.

**TRADE-IN**
*Normal Magic*
Discard 1 Level 8 monster to draw 2 cards.

**ARCHANGEL CHRISTIA** *(TCG name: "Archlord Kristya")*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Angel, 2800/2300)*
If you have exactly 4 Angel-type monsters in your cemetery, you can Special Summon this card from your hand. If you do this, add 1 Angel-type monster from your cemetery to your hand. While this card is face-up on the field, neither player may Special Summon. If this face-up card would be sent from the field to the cemetery, return it to the top of its owner's Deck instead.

**THE CREATOR**
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Thunder, 2300/3000)*
You cannot Special Summon this card from the cemetery, Once per turn, select 1 monster in your cemetery. By sending 1 card in your hand to the cemetery, Special Summon that monster.

**GRAVEKEEPER'S SPY**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Dark Spellcaster, 1200/2000)*
FLIP: Special Summon 1 "Gravekeeper's" monster with 1500 or less Attack points from your Deck.

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## CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI:

**LIGHTLORD PALADIN JEAN** *(TCG name: "Jain, Lightsworn Paladin")*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1800/1200)*
If this card attacks an opponent's monster, it gains 300 Attack points during the Damage Step only. During each of your End Phases, send 2 cards from the top of your Deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD BEAST WOLF** *(TCG name: "Wulf, Lightsworn Beast")*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Beast-Warrior, 2100/300)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. When this car is sent from your Deck to the cemetery, Special Summon it.

**HONEST**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Angel, 1100/1900)*
During your Main Phase, you can return this card from the field to its owner's hand. During either player's Damage Step, when a face-up Light attribute monster battles, you can send this card from your hand to the cemetery to have that monster gain Attack power equal to the Attack points of the opposing monster, until the End Phase.

**COMMAND SILENCER**
*Instant Magic*

Activate only when an opponent’s monster attacks. Negate that attack, and draw 1 card.

# 40. One

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*Huge thanks to ScarletWeather for writing the flashback portions as well as his continued support of my story.*

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*Aino rushed towards Toragami as the police questioned both of the men. She hadn't heard enough to realize what was going on, but she knew it wasn't good. When she reached the arena, she saw why they had been laughing. Toragami had collapsed to her knees, her life points reduced to a mere one*

*thousand. Her opponent had summoned 'Volcanic Edge', used its effect, and followed up by activating 'Magical Bonds' and setting a card. Toragami would only be able to play one card from her hand this turn. Her Lava Golem was still paralyzed by 'Torture Wheel'. The situation looked hopeless.*

*"Toragami-san!" Aino shouted.*

*Toragami turned to her friend. Her eyes were filled with tears. "Weak… I'm so weak…"*

*"Don't feel too bad," her opponent laughed. "After all, you're dueling the great Eraser. Know why they call me that, Toragami-sama?"*

*He leered at the terrified girl. "Everyone I defeat disappears."*

*"Weak…"*

*The trembling in Toragami's voice was gone. 'Eraser' stared at her. "Yes, that's right. You're weak. Too weak to ever—"*

*"No. You are weak."*

*Aino looked closer at her friend. "T-Toragami-san?"*

*Toragami slowly got to her feet. Her eyes were open. Open and blazing. Something was different about her. She seemed charged with some sort of strange energy. "I… will… not… lose," she growled. "My turn. Draw."*

*Without a word, Toragami activated 'Cyclone'. Her life points fell by five hundred as a whirlwind tore across the field, shattering 'Magical Bonds'. "Tch," Eraser muttered.*

*"I activate 'Hand Obliteration'," Toragami declared as she discarded the four cards remaining in her hand and drew four more. She selected one. "I play the magic card 'Pot of Greed', drawing two cards. Next, I summon 'The Creator Incarnate' in attack position."*

*Aino began to look frightened. Was this really Toragami?*

*"I release The Creator Incarnate for its own monster effect," Toragami continued. "I special summon The Creator from my hand."*

*The gigantic, celestial monster appeared beside Toragami's Golem, glaring disapprovingly at Eraser. "I will now activate The Creator's monster effect," Toragami declared as she carefully placed a card*

*from her hand in the graveyard. “Special summon Material Dragon.”*

*A golden dragon with six wings and a serpentine body appeared beside Toragami, roaring.*

*“Magic card, ‘Broken Earth’. Your weakest monster is destroyed.” Killer Tomato shattered to bits.*

*“Final card this turn. I activate ‘Raise Dead’, targeting the Lightning Gear Goryu in my cemetery.” A gigantic angelic creature appeared beside Toragami’s other two monsters, roaring. Its two thousand nine hundred attack points and ability to inflict piercing damage essentially guaranteed an end to the duel.*

*Toragami pointed at her opponent. “Material Dragon, attack—”*

*Eraser flipped his final card, appearing to be in a slight panic. “Trap card activate, ‘Magic Cylinder’! I inflict damage to you equal to your attacking monster’s attack points!”*

*“Monster effect,” Toragami replied. “Material Dragon allows me to negate effects that decrease my life points and gain that many instead.”*

*Suddenly, Toragami's life points skyrocketed. She motioned to her other two monsters. "Lightning Gear Goryu attacks your defense position Volcanic Edge."*

*The monster exploded, dealing one thousand seven hundred points of damage to Eraser. He stared at The Creator, which had two thousand three hundred attack points— enough to finish him. "Damn it!"*

*"The Creator, direct attack. Judgment of the Highest!"*

*The final blow landed. Both sets of manacles came unclamped. Toragami slumped to her feet, as if in a daze.*

*Meanwhile, the police attempted to hold on to the two men they had collared by the circuit breaker. "Hold still!"*

*One man twisted and slammed a hand into the circuit breaker, cutting the power. The warehouse was plunged into darkness, giving him a chance to break free.*

*This was not all that happened.*

*Toragami looked up in time to see the massive steel beam hurtling towards her at breakneck speed.*

*“HINATA-CHAN!” Aino screamed as the beam crashed to the ground.*

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***YU-GI-OH! Negative Zero: Genex Finals***
***Turn 40: “One”***

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**Aino** *— 2500 LP*
**Toragami** *— 4000 LP*

While Aino had “The Creator” and ‘Archangel Christia’ on her side of the field along with a set card and her field, “Mausoleum of the Deceased Emperor”, Toragami’s field, which had “Lightllord Beast Wolf” and “Lightlord Paladin Jean” and a set card of her own, seemed much more threatening.

It was Toragami’s turn, and she drew her card.

Katsuki looked over at Shougo, and saw tears coming out of his eyes, even though he wasn’t sobbing. “What’s wrong?” she asked.

“I know why Toragami-san is the way she is,” Shougo replied, and then leaned in a little closer so people other than her or Chiba wouldn’t hear. “She lost her arm, didn’t she?”

“How did you—?!” Katsuki stammered. Everything about this kid was surprising her, but she couldn’t cover it up at this point. “Toragami-san’s artificial arm doesn’t have the strength to hold a Duel Disk yet. They’re still developing the technology… but that’s why usually I have to put on her Duel Disk for her. It’s not just a ‘rich girl’ thing.”

“I… I didn’t think it was,” Shougo said as he wiped his face.

Toragami closed her eyes as she looked at her hand. “You really are going to continue to duel me, no matter what happens, Aino-san?”

“Whatever it takes,” Aino replied, although her voice betrayed uncertainty.

“I sacrifice my ‘Lightlord Paladin Jean’,” Toragami said, switching the cards on the Duel Arena. “To summon ‘Lightlord Angel Cherubim’ in attack mode.”

Jean’s hologram faded out into a sea of light, to be replaced by a beam which seemed to turn sideways to form a humanoid image. As the image became more solidified, a blue-haired woman carrying a long staff could be seen. She opened her eyes, and feathered wings behind her back suddenly became revealed, generating wind as the Lightlord readied herself for battle.

**Lightlord Angel Cherubim** — *LV5 Light Angel (2300 ATK)*

“Lightlord Angel Cherubim’s monster effect activates,” Toragami went on. “When I sacrifice a ‘Lightlord’ to summon her, by sending four cards from the top of my deck to the cemetery, I can destroy two cards my opponent controls.”

Aino noted with much concern that “Lightlord Warrior Garoth” and ‘Lightlord Hunter Raikou’ were among the cards sent. The two other cards were “Burial from a Different Dimension” and “Arcana Force XIV — Temperance”.

“I choose your two monsters, Archangel Christia and The Creator,” Toragami said as Cherbuim flapped her wings.

“Reverse card open… ‘My Body as a Shield’,” Aino declared.

“She had no choice but to activate that,” Chiba mused. “If she didn’t, the duel would be over now.”

“By paying 1500 life points, I negate the effects of cards that would destroy my own monsters, and destroy them instead,” Aino explained.

**Aino** — *2500 LP — 1500 = 1000 LP*

Aino grunted as she felt a strange effect in her body, and gripped her stomach, seeming to swallow her own scream. As Shougo observed this, he remembered Tenjouin’s words from Chiba’s duel against Ganryu.

*Solid Vision technology creates visual illusions that can overwhelm someone who is not prepared. In laymen’s terms, they’re as real as the duelists want them to be.*

Shougo rubbed his neck. *Surely Aino-san doesn’t want to be hurt by these magic cards. Could it be… Toragami-san is trying to show her something? No… that’s cruel… too cruel!*

The magic card created a sonic reverb that smacked against Toragami’s Cherubim. She shielded

herself with her wings, but was still destroyed.

Toragami stood, arms crossed, unfazed.

“Toragami-san,” Aino whispered. She seemed to be broken at this point, gasping for breath.

“Is your existence that weak?” Toragami muttered.

“Wh… what?”

“Is your existence that weak that you’d be crushed by something like this?” Toragami went on.

“Toragami-san…” Aino had a heartbroken quality to her voice.

“You’re so desperate to save me that you never once considered that the person you wish to save might not be in danger at all,” Toragami said, holding her card hand aside. “The Aino Naomi I remember never judged by appearances. If anything, you’re the one in danger.”

Aino’s eyes widened as her grief suddenly disappeared. *Her facedown card.…*

“You assumed that the card I hid was ‘Holy Barrier — Mirror Force’,” Toragami replied to her thoughts. “Now you’re going to pay for that

assumption. Reverse card open… equip magic, ‘Lightlord Rapier’!”

Her voice hid a cadence of emotion.

“Could Toragami-sama be… having fun?” Katsuki pondered. “She never sounded like this, except…” She touched her lip, stopping mid-thought.

“Except?” Chiba asked.

“Except when she dueled Shougo-kun…” Katsuki finished.

*Come to think of it, she sounded like this when dueling Judai-sama, too,* Chiba thought to himself. *I thought it was just anger. And indeed it does sound very much like anger, but… could Toragami-san be… enjoying herself?*

Shougo stayed silent, although he doubtless noticed Toragami’s emotion as well.

Beast Wolf equipped the sword and staff that appeared on the field and roared.

“By equipping this card to a ‘Lightlord’ monster, I raise its attack power by 700,” Toragami explained.

**Lightlord Beast Wolf** — *2100 LP + 700 = 2800 LP*

“That’s enough to destroy ‘The Creator’,” Tenjouin observed. “Although the real problem is that ‘Archangel Christia’. With that on the field, Toragami-san can’t summon her ace.”

“You’re assuming she has it in her hand to begin with,” Abe reminded her. “We know Toragami-san only has 1 ‘Judgment Dragoon’. It may not be that simple.”

Kiyotaki frowned slightly. *No, she doesn’t have that card in her hand yet*, he thought to himself, glancing at a wristwatch he held on his hand. *It is for moments like this that I put together this tournament. Toragami-san, will you fall for the temptation of the Light of Ruin? Even in moments like this, you may still be in danger if you are not careful…*

The announcer seemed oblivious, though, voicing the sentiments of the crowd, who went up in cheers. “It seems Toragami-san has made a turnaround, everyone!” he shouted. “Whereas earlier she was up against two very strong monsters, now her Beast Wolf can at least destroy one of them! What will she do?”

“Lightlord Beast Wolf, destroy my opponent’s ‘The Creator’!” Toragami shouted. “Light Rapier’s Reversal!”

Beast Wolf nodded and, in a flash, bisected The Creator with the sword. Then, just before it fell apart, the Wolf struck its body with the staff, causing a large explosion. Aino shouted, appearing to be in pain as her Life Points dropped even further.

**Aino** — *1000 LP — 500 = 500 LP*

“I set two cards and end my turn,” Toragami finally declared.

Aino looked extremely flush now. “My turn…” She gasped.

“Naomi-chan!” Katsuki shouted reflexively.

“What… what’s wrong with Aino-san?” Abe asked. “She looks pale. I think we should cancel this duel and send Ayukawa-san in…”

“Just a moment,” Kiyotaki stopped him. “She hasn’t surrendered yet.”

“Kiyotaki-kouchou!” Tenjouin shouted reflexively.

“…d… draw…” Aino wheezed as she took a card.

Everyone in the audience gasped.

“Is she still trying?” one person asked.

“Doesn’t she know who her opponent is? She should surrender!” said another.

“‘Pot of Greed’… activate,” Aino said, short of breath. “Draw… two cards…”

Shougo’s eyes were forced shut by the blackness he saw in that card.

“Shougo-kun!” Katsuki shouted.

“Shougo-kun!” Chiba was slow to react, but noticed as well.

He, however, was wrapped up in another vision…

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*Voices wrapped up in the darkness…*

*“She’s in shock! She’s going into cardiac arrest! Damn it, do something!”*

*“We caught the guys who tried to kill her, but the duelist escaped…”*

*Kill… kill me? Someone tried to kill me?*

*Why? Why should someone be trying to…*

*“It’s getting worse! What about her arm?”*

*“Oh dear Lord…”*

*“Calm down, Kiyotaki! We can’t have you wig out on us, too!”*

*“Sir… I don’t know if we’ll be able to save her arm. We just have to get her to the hospital.”*

*“Hinata-chan! Hinata-chan…”*

*Someone’s trying to* kill *me… why… when did I ever hurt anybody? Unless… maybe…*

*…By winning all of my duels… did I hurt people? Maybe I deserve this?… I…*

*The darkness claimed my voice.*

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“I’m here,” Shougo said. “I think I was just sympathizing with Aino-san a little too much. I’m sorry to worry you.”

“Damn it, Shougo-kun,” Katsuki muttered. “You wouldn’t have to apologize if you got a hold of yourself! Shougo-kun is Shougo-kun, and Aino-san is Aino-san. Okay?”

“We’re really concerned for you,” Chiba added. “Please don’t keep anything from us for the sake of not worrying us. It will make it worse in the end, okay?”

“Mmm,” Shougo replied, and nodded.

“I sacrifice ‘Archangel Christia’,” Aino said, raising her arm into the air. “And I summon ‘Material Dragon’ in attack mode!”

The angel vanished, and where the card once stood, whips of pure tendrils of energy shot out into the air.

“She’d sacrifice the only thing keeping Toragami-sama from summoning ‘Judgment Dragoon’?” Tenjouin thought aloud.

“She’s not out of the game yet,” Matsutani said with a laugh. “In fact, her game may be just starting…”

“Matsutani-san?” Tenjouin’s confusion was apparent.

“Just wait and see…” Matsutani’s smile betrayed her age for a moment. She appeared the old lady who knew a secret.

Out of the card on Aino’s side of the field, golden beams of light seemed to solidify to form the shape of a six-tailed dragon. Its roar was deafening and shook all who heard it with fear.

**Material Dragon** — *LV6 Light Dragon (2400 ATK)*

“That’s a very potent monster,” Toragami remarked. “However, it’s not strong enough to defeat my Beast Wolf.”

Aino frowned. “I know. From my hand, I activate the equip magic ‘Explosion’! Now, since my life points are lower than yours, my Material Dragon’s Life Points will double!”

As Material Dragon’s image grew in size, its roar became even more fearsome.

**Material Dragon** — *2400 ATK * 2 = 4800 ATK*

“But if that facedown is ‘Mirror Force’…” Chiba began.

“…it would be pointless! ‘Material Dragon’ can negate destructive effects,” Shougo said. “As long as

its user has a card to discard."

"But Toragami-sama's facedowns may not be destruction," Katsuki said. "She can use 'Lightlord Barrier' to stall the attack. Aino-san knows that! I hope she's not being reckless."

Aino's face, however, showed that she knew she was taking a chance.

*Hinata-chan… you have changed. The girl I remember wouldn't have bluffed me by setting an equip card. You're completely underestimating me. Hinata-chan would never do that.*

She frowned as she took her last ounce of determination to the limit.

*I don't want to win this. I just want to wake you up. Until you understand that, I won't stop attacking, Toragami-sama.*

"Material Dragon, attack Toragami-sama's Beast Wolf!" Aino ordered. "Material Burst!"

"Reverse card open… 'Lightlord Barrier'!" Toragami shouted. "By sending two cards from the top of my deck to the cemetery, I negate Material Dragon's attack!"

She took two cards from her deck and scanned them. “And one of them is my second ‘Beast Wolf’,” she said. “Without your Archangel Christia on the field, I must Special Summon it. Defense position!”

The second Beast Wolf roared onto the field.

**Lightlord Beast Wolf** *(300 DEF)*

Toragami placed her other card into the cemetery. As Material Dragon’s attack was deflected, Aino’s eyes widened as she realized which card it was.

“Holy Barrier — Mirror Force”.

“Turn end,” Aino sighed.

“Now it’s over, Aino-san,” Toragami said. “My turn, draw.”

As she touched the card, Chiba saw the light of her aura glowing around her. Kiyotaki, too, could see evidence that she was calling upon the power of the Light of Ruin — but not in the way he anticipated.

*By using Lightlord Barrier, Toragami-san was able to get that much closer to her ace,* Kiyotaki thought to herself. *However, if her hand is what it seems to be…*

Kiyotaki bit his lip. *She's not changing fate with the Light of Ruin's power. She is simply aware somehow…*

"Are you afraid, Aino-san?" Toragami asked as she held the card in her hand.

"Why should I be?" Aino replied. "Because I'm about to lose?"

"Because before you do, I'm going to tell you the truth," Toragami said. "And I know you're afraid to hear it. Because even though both you and I know it, I am going to make it a matter of public knowledge, by telling it to you here."

Aino looked off to the side. "What do you mean?" she asked half-heartedly. "You're not making sense."

"First, since I've met the summoning requirements, I will call to the field my ace card, the symbol of sacrifice and the dragon I've forced to do my bidding. Break the heaven of righteousness and show yourself here! By your name, I call on you…"

Murmurs in the audience began straightaway. "Why is she being so dramatic?"

"Jeez, it's just a card."

Toragami ignored them. “Come out, ‘Judgment Dragoon’!”

And just like that, a point of light almost instantaneously came out on the field and became Toragami’s well known ace card. Unlike ‘Material Dragon’ or ‘Lightlord Angel Cherubim’, relatively little fanfare accompanied its arrival.

**Judgment Dragoon** — *LV8 Light Dragon (3000 ATK)*

“Just like that?” Shougo mused. “It seemed much more powerful when I was dueling her…”

After an uncomfortable pause, Aino asked what everyone else knew but didn’t say aloud. “That dragon isn’t strong enough to destroy my Material Dragon, and you can’t use its effect,” she said. “What are you planning?”

Toragami turned her glance to the audience, her eyes seeming to penetrate each onlooker, stunning them into silence. She then saw Shougo, and her eyes furrowed. Shougo blushed.

“Think back, Aino-san,” Toragami said. “To the day I sealed my smile.”

Shougo was stunned as he was brought to a vision, without the aid of Darkness this time…

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*Toragami's eyes opened.*

*She was in the middle of a hospital room. Several vases of flowers sat near her. Her deck was carefully arranged beside one of them. She reached toward it, and was puzzled by the fact that her arm didn't seem to be moving. She looked down.*

*Her arm, from the shoulder down, was completely missing.*

*"When the beam fell, you tried to get out of the way," someone said, "But it smashed your arm anyway. The doctors couldn't save it. They amputated it while you were unconscious."*

*Toragami looked at the speaker. Aino was sitting in a chair nearby. "…What happened to the other duelist?"*

*Aino shook her head. "Gone. He ran the moment he lost the duel."*

*Toragami bowed her head. "Weak. I was completely weak."*

*Aino looked at her. "Don't say that. You defeated him."*

*Toragami didn't look up. "I allowed him to frighten me. If I had fought back sooner, instead of allowing my own fear to rule me, maybe I would have been able to escape. You rescued me, Aino-san. I would have lost that duel if you hadn't saved me then. As I thought… someone's always saving me."*

*Aino shivered, remembering the blank look in Toragami's eyes during the final moves of the duel. "Toragami-san?"*

*"…Aino-san, I've decided," Toragami said. "From this moment forward, I will not smile again."*

*"W… what are you saying?" Aino laughed uncomfortably. "Toragami-san, I…"*

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"You didn't take me seriously then," Toragami said with her eyes closed. "That is to be understood. A smile can be a physically involuntary reaction to an amusing event, or perhaps even forced by an outside stimulus. But I was serious."

"Why would you do such a thing, Toragami-san?" Aino asked, this time remembering to be

courteous. “Why would you keep your happiness to yourself?”

“You don’t understand,” Toragami said with a shake of her head. “It is not a matter of me hiding my happiness from you. It is the legacy that I must follow.”

“Toragami-sama has always been like this since that day…” Katsuki sighed. “I thought it was just… I can’t talk too much about it in public.”

Shougo shook his head. “You don’t have to say it, Katsuki-san. I understand everything now.”

He held his chest loosely. *Those dark impulses have stilled now,* he thought to himself. *Darkness isn’t reacting. I still don’t know entirely what this means, but… I don’t have any questions. Toragami-san, you think I’m stronger than you, but I couldn’t face the things you’ve had to because of your determination…*

“The legacy?” Aino shouted. “Do you think your parents wanted an emotionless heir?”

“I know they do not, but until I can control my own emotions, it is easier to simply not have them.” Toragami raised her hand. “I sacrifice my Defense

Position ‘Beast Wolf’ to summon ‘Lightlord Dragon Gragonith’ in attack position.”

A bolt of light shot out from beneath Beast Wolf, swallowing it up. A light blinded everyone in the stadium, and even momentarily shorted out the Duel Arena equipment. When everyone came to, they saw the majestic Gragonith side by side with Judgment Dragoon.

**Lightlord Dragon Gragonith** — *LV5 Light Dragon (2000 ATK)*

“Gragonith’s attack and defense power are raised by 300 for each unique Lightlord that sleeps in my cemetery,” Toragami went on. “Cherubim, Beast Wolf, Raikou, Jean and Garoth make for a total of 1200.”

**Lightlord Dragon Gragonith** — *2000 ATK + 1500 = 3500 ATK*

“Next, I reveal my facedown card,” Toragami said, as it raised up onto the field. “‘Final Light’!”

“What?!” Katsuki shouted with disbelief. “That card’s never been in Toragami-sama’s deck before! Could it be… could it be she changed her deck knowing this fight would happen?”

In the distance, Kiyotaki frowned. *Toragami-san set "Lightlord Rapier" before to psych out her friend. But this time, there was no reason. She must have known Aino-san was going to attack anyway. Are you trying to send some kind of message?*

**Toragami** — *4000 LP — 1000 = 3000 LP*

"You are aware of the card that would best be suited for me to summon?" Toragami asked Aino.

"If you summon one of your Lightlords, you will lower your Gragonith's attack power," Aino replied. "Although you could probably win by suiciding Beast Wolf, and then lowering your Life Points so that Explosion's effect would backfire."

Toragami frowned. "I can forgive you for thinking that way, but you've forgotten the cards I sent to the cemetery. In particular, Jean's effect."

Aino flashed back. *"Beast Wolf" and…* Her eyes widened. *Oh no!*

"The card I summon is 'Honest'." Toragami said as she summoned the colorful angel to the field.

**Honest** — *LV4 Light Angel (1900 DEF)*

"By the effect of 'Final Light', you can summon a monster with 2000 attack points or less from your

cemetery," Toragami offered.

"I decline," Aino said, knowing Gragonith would destroy it anyway. It was pointless. The duel was over, and she had lost. Even worse, she'd failed to reach out to…

*Naomi-chan?*

Aino blinked. Was she hearing things?

*Naomi-chan, it's me…*

Suddenly, Aino and Toragami were in a space alone together. Everything else had fallen away, and they were eleven years old again.

*"Hinata-chan…" Naomi felt tears form in her eyes.*

*"I'm sorry that I hurt you all this time," Hinata said. "I couldn't take a chance. Everybody'd been watching me, all this time, waiting for me to show some kind of weakness that they could take advantage of. If I'd shown my tears, I would betray my family name."*

*"Hinata-chan, that can't be all to life… just winning duel after duel." Naomi cried openly. "Come back to us! It doesn't matter if you can't be*

*the heir to the family; Shiho-chan and I will still be your friends."*

*Hinata closed her eyes and, just then, she smiled. "I'm sorry," she said. "This will be the last time you see my smile."*

*"NO!" Naomi shouted, and reached for Hinata, but she was gone, dissolved into light.*

*"But it's there even if you don't see it…" her voice echoed as Naomi's vision ended.*

"I use Honest's effect to place his card back into my hand," Toragami said. Aino looked catatonic, her eyes empty as she could only await the final attack.

"It looks like this duel has ended just as Toragami-sama predicted," the announcer said, his voice echoing in Aino's ears. "Her undefeated record will continue!"

"Judgment Dragoon, attack Material Dragon," Toragami ordered. "And I will now activate Honest's monster effect. Honest Wings!"

She took the card from her hand and placed it into the cemetery. "Now, Judgment Dragoon will gain attack power equal to Material Dragon's attack strength."

As Dragoon’s wind span spread and its attack power raised, a surge of light flashed from its body that everyone could see, that once again temporarily shorted out the equipment.

**Judgment Dragoon** — *3000 ATK + 4800 = 7800 ATK*

“Destroy my past with the Light of Truth,” Toragami ordered. Judgment Dragoon’s attack was simple, and it blasted Material Dragon into smithereens as it roared, unable to evade its own destruction.

“I don’t understand,” Tenjouin said. “If she could have won without Gragonith, why bother summoning it?”

“It’s beyond my knowledge,” Kiyotaki admitted. “I was not expecting that, myself.”

*Of course, I knew her set card was “Final Light”, but she could have activated that last turn and ended this straightaway,* he mused internally. *Toragami Hinata, are you trying to confuse us?*

**Aino** — *500 LP — 3000 = 0*

“Toragami-sama really has changed,” Katsuki said sadly. “That was a cruel move of her!”

Chiba couldn’t comment, as the aura of the Light of Ruin had left afterimages in his eyes. He was still trying to comprehend what he just saw.

Aino and Shougo alone in the entire group seemed to understand the significance.

*You had this planned all along,* Aino thought to herself as her platform lowered. *Perhaps if you didn’t play the duel the way you did, you wouldn’t have had that opportunity to reach out to me just then. I wonder why…*

Shougo smiled. *You defeated the Light of Ruin with your own power,* he thought to himself. *Now I see. You could have won, but that wouldn’t have been enough. You needed your friend to know you were still in there fighting. Once again… I have to admire you. Toragami-san… one day, when I have recovered from my illness, I’ll defeat you for sure. And then you’ll be free, just as I am…*

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***Shougo:*** *“Wow, that was pretty serious.”*
***Aino:*** *“Indeed it was. But now I’m back and able to announce the next chapter!”*
***Chiba:*** *“The next match is All-American Mark Walker versus world traveller Isabel Suárez… and it*

*seems to be a pretty heated rivalry!"*
***Mizuno:*** *"'Heated rivalry', you say? That got my attention!"*
***Tenjouin:*** *"The next duel kicks off with all the levity of a true rivalry. The hearts of the audience soars on the winds of the duelist's passionate moves. It's been a long time since I've been able to see a duel like this! I have to admit, I'm excited too."*
***Aino:*** *"The joy of dueling is reintroduced to captive onlookers, next time on* ***Yu-Gi-Oh! Negative Zero: 'Undying Phoenix! Fire vs. Water, the Elemental Battle'****. Please enjoy."*
***Mark:*** *"Action! Surprises! And… you guessed it… a whole lotta me!"*

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**TODAY'S FEATURED CARD: *"Final Light"***
A normal magic card that allows you to pay 1000 life points to summon any Light-attribute monster from your cemetery. Your opponent can then summon any monster with 2000 or less attack points from their own cemetery. An easy way to recycle Honest, although there may be other uses?…

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**CARDS USED BY NAOMI AINO**

**MAUSOLEUM OF THE DECEASED EMPEROR** *(TCG name: "Mausoleum of the Emperor". Note: This card has a different effect in the actual game.)*
*Field Magic*
Once per turn, by paying 1000 Life Points, the turn player can Normal Summon or Set a monster without offering sacrifices.

**THE CREATOR**
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Thunder, 2300/3000)*
You cannot Special Summon this card from the cemetery, Once per turn, select 1 monster in your cemetery. By sending 1 card in your hand to the cemetery, Special Summon that monster.

**ARCHANGEL CHRISTIA** *(TCG name: "Archlord Kristya")*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Angel, 2800/2300)*
If you have exactly 4 Angel-type monsters in your cemetery, you can Special Summon this card from your hand. If you do this, add 1 Angel-type monster from your cemetery to your hand. While this card is face-up on the field, neither player may Special Summon. If this face-up card would be sent from the field to the cemetery, return it to the top of its owner's Deck instead.

**MY BODY AS A SHIELD**

*Instant Magic*

When your opponent activates a card effect that can destroy monsters on the field, pay 1500 Life Points to negate the activation of that effect and destroy the card.

**POT OF GREED**

*Normal Magic*

Draw 2 cards from your Deck.

**MATERIAL DRAGON** *(TCG name: "Prime Material Dragon")*

*Effect Monster (LV6 Light Dragon, 2400/2000)*

Any effect that would inflict damage to a player instead increases their Life Points by the same amount. When a card's effect to destroy monsters on the field activates, you can send 1 card from your hand to the cemetery to negate that effect, and destroy it.

**EXPLOSION** *(TCG name: "Megamorph")*

*Equip Magic*

If your Life Points are lower than your opponent's, double the original Attack points of the equipped monster. If your Life Points are higher than your opponent's, halve the original Attack points of the equipped monster.

## CARDS USED BY HINATA TORAGAMI

**LIGHTLORD PALADIN JEAN** *(TCG name: "Jain, Lightsworn Paladin")*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1800/1200)*
If this card attacks an opponent's monster, it gains 300 Attack points during the Damage Step only. During each of your End Phases, send 2 cards from the top of your Deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD BEAST WOLF** *(TCG name: "Wulf, Lightsworn Beast")*
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Beast-Warrior, 2100/300)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. When this car is sent from your Deck to the cemetery, Special Summon it.

**LIGHTLORD ANGEL CHERUBIM** *(TCG name: "Celestia, Lightsworn Angel")*
*Effect Monster (LV5 Light Angel, 2300/200)*
When you Sacrifice Summon this card by sacrificing a "Lightlord" monster, you can send 4 cards from the top of your Deck to the cemetery to destroy up to 2 cards your opponent controls.

**LIGHTLORD WARRIOR GAROTH** *(TCG name: "Garoth, Lightsworn Warrior")*

*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Warrior, 1850/1300)*
If cards are sent from the deck to the cemetery by the effect of a “Lightlord” monster you control other than ‘Lightlord Warrior Garoth’, you may send 2 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery, and for each “Lightlord” Monster discarded by this effect, draw 1 card.

**LIGHTLORD HUNTER RAIKOU** *(TCG name: “Ryko, Lightsworn Hunter”)*
*Effect Monster (LV2 Light Beast, 200/100)*
When this face-down card is flipped face-up, by sending the top 3 cards from your deck to the cemetery you can destroy 1 card on the field.

**BURIAL FROM A DIFFERENT DIMENSION**
*Instant Magic*
Select up to 3 monster cards either player has removed from the game and return them to their respective owners’ cemeteries.

**ARCANA FORCE XIV — TEMPERANCE**
*Effect Monster (LV6 Light Angel, 2400/2400)*
During either player’s turn, you can discard this card from your hand to reduce Battle Damage from 1 attack to 0. When this card is Summoned, flip a coin and apply the appropriate effect:

* Heads: Halve all Battle Damage you take.
* Tails: Halve all Battle Damage your opponent takes.

**LIGHTLORD RAPIER** *(TCG name: "Lightsworn Sabre")*
*Equip Magic*
Equip only to a "Lightlord" monster. It gains 700 Attack points. When this card is sent from your Deck to the cemetery, you can equip it to 1 "Lightlord" monster you control.

**LIGHTLORD BARRIER** *(TCG name: "Lightsworn Barrier")*
*Continuous Trap*
Send 2 cards from the top of your Deck to the cemetery to negate an opponent's attack against a "Lightlord" monster you control.

**HOLY BARRIER — MIRROR FORCE**
*Normal Trap*
Activate only when your opponent declares an attack. Destroy all Attack Position monsters your opponent controls.

**JUDGMENT DRAGOON** *(TCG name: "Judgment Dragon")*
*Effect Monster (LV8 Light Dragon, 3000/2600)*
This card cannot be Normal Summoned or Set. This

card cannot be Special Summoned except when there are 4 or more unique “Lightlord” Monsters in your cemetery. By paying 1000 Life Points, destroy all cards on the field except this one. During your End Phase, send 4 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**LIGHTLORD DRAGON GRAGONITH** *(TCG name: “Gragonith, Lightsworn Dragon”)*
*Effect Monster (LV5 Light Dragon, 2000/1600)*
This card gains 300 Attack and Defense points for each unique “Lightlord” monster in your cemetery. When the Attack points of this monster is higher than the Defense point of a Defense Position monster it destroys, inflict the difference as Battle Damage to your opponent. During your End Phase, send 3 cards from the top of your deck to the cemetery.

**FINAL LIGHT**
*Normal Magic*
Pay 1000 Life Points to Special Summon 1 Light-attribute monster from your cemetery. Your opponent can then Special Summon 1 monster with 2000 or less Attack points from their cemetery.

**HONEST**
*Effect Monster (LV4 Light Angel, 1100/1900)*

During your Main Phase, you can return this card from the field to its owner’s hand. During the Damage Step of either player’s Battle Phase, you can discard this card from your hand when a Light-attribute monster you control battles to raise its Attack points by the Attack points of the opponent’s monster until the End Phase.

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